Chapter 1
NEW YORK...
NOW THEN, AS THE RESULTS OF THE VOTE ARE UNANIMOUS,
PREPARATIONS WILL BEGIN FOR THE SALE OF OUR COMPANY TO MR. REMMINGTON
THANK YOU VERY MUCH
LET'S BUILD A NEW ERA TOGETHER
WHAT DOES THE BOSS SEE IN THAT YOUNG GUY?
HE DOESN'T HAVE A CHOICE. OUR COMPANY IS IN TROUBLE

SIR,
RICHARD, HOW DID IT GO?
HOTEL
NOW, I BELIEVE THAT'S IT FOR TODAY
BESIDES, THEY DON'T CALL HIM THE "ICE DRAGON" FOR NOTHING.
MICAH RYU* REMMINGTON OWNER OF "SAKURA GARDEN SUITES"
RICHARD WRIGHT, MICAH'S EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
WE'VE INCREASED OUR STOCK HOLDINGS TO 30%
Hotel Kuyabashi
GOOD KEEP BUYING, THEN
YES, SIR
*NOTE MICAH'S MIDDLE NAME, RYU, MEANS DRAGON

WE'VE BEEN BUYING OUT HOTEL CHAINS FOR YEARS I THINK I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING BY NOW
SAKURA GARDEN
WE ONLY NEED TO REPLACE THE MANAGEMENT ONCE WE'VE BOUGHT THEM OUT
HMM.
THOUGH, CONSIDERING IT'S A COMPANY OVERFLOWING WITH JAPANESE EMPLOYEES, I THINK IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE MANAGEMENT REPELS US
YOU'RE AMAZING, SIR
OF COURSE.
I'M PROUD TO WORK FOR YOU

EXCUSE ME, THE PHONE
RUSTLE
YOU ALWAYS DO GOOD WORK.
AH...
THANK YOU.
BRRRRRR
KURAHASHI
THE KURAHASHI CHAIN OF HOTELS...
IN JAPAN.. HUH?
SIR

IS THE CEREMONY FOR THE TWO OF YOU GOING TO BE HELD SOON?
NO... IT'S BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL AFTER THE KURAHASHI DEAL GOES THROUGH
THAT SELFISH PRINCESS, HM?
SHE PROBABLY JUST WANTS ME TO TAKE HER SHOPPING AGAIN OR SOMETHING.
IT'S MISS GRANT
...OH BOY.
THE GRANTS ARE A PROMINENT FAMILY IN THE FINANCIAL WORLD
THEN I HOPE A DECISION IS MADE SOON!
YES...
...YOU'RE RIGHT
THERE'S NO BETTER WAY TO BOOST THE REPUTATION OF THIS COMPANY

...
YES... ALL RIGHT, I UNDER-STAND.
TONIGHT...?
ALEX?
—YES
HELLO...?
SHUT

I WON'T ACCEPT THAT!
WHAM
JAPAN HEADQUARTERS OF THE KURAHASHI HOTEL CHAIN

YOU'RE THE PROBLEM! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE FOLLOWING OUR LATE PRESIDENT'S LAST WISHES!
WE'RE ACTING IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THIS COMPANY
AMERICANS, BUYING THIS HOTEL?!
I WON'T ACCEPT SUCH A SOLUTION
HOW CAN I?!
SUZUKI-SAN, PLEASE CALM DOWN
Y-YES?
YOU CAN'T
SUZUKI-SAN
SIR!
PLEASE REFRAIN FROM CROSS EXAMINING HIM
YUUKI-SAN HAS ONLY JUST RECENTLY BECOME PART OF THIS ADMIN-ISTRATION

SLIDE
DISGRACE-FUL! I'M LEAVING!!
PAPA
YUUKI-SAN, PLEASE DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM.
SMIRK
OH NO...
SUZUKI-SAN IS ALWAYS LIKE THAT...
FOR NOW, WE HAVE TO LISTEN TO HIM
BESIDES, SUZUKI-SAN is OUR OLDEST REMAINING MEMBER
...
8

FATHER!
A FEW MONTHS AGO, I WAS A NORMAL COLLEGE STUDENT...
MY NAME IS YUUKI KURAHASHI.
LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF
HOWEVER,
FATHER'S WILL CHANGED MY LIFE
AFTER MY FATHER'S SUDDEN DEATH, I SUCCEEDED HIM AS PRESIDENT OF THE KURAHASHI HOTEL CHAIN.
I'VE LEFT MY LIFE AS A STUDENT TO BECOME PRESIDENT...
IT'S TOO HARD FOR ME TO RUN A COMPANY
EVERYONE WILL SUFFER BECAUSE OF ME...
BUT IF I DON'T PULL IT TOGETHER,

BOSTAL
A HOSTILE TAKEOVER BY THE SAKURA GARDEN SUITES IN AMERICA...
THEY'VE ASKED TO MEET WITH THE TOP EXECUTIVES OF KURAHASHI IN A FEW DAYS
SIGH
FLIP
IT'S HARD SETTLING THESE CONFLICTS...
MAYBE THIS HOTEL WOULD BE BETTER OFF NOT EXISTING...
SLUMP
SLIDE
I JUST DON'T UNDER-STAND IT.
WHY DOES EVERYONE CHANGE THEIR MIND WHEN MONEY'S INVOLVED, ANYWAY?

YOUR MOTHER IS ASKING FOR YOU.
OH... OKAY.
AND UM... YOU DON'T HAVE TO CALL ME PRESIDENT, YOU KNOW.
N-NOT AT ALL!
WE'RE ALMOST THE SAME AGE, ANYWAY.
YOU'RE MY PRESIDENT, AFTER ALL!
YOUNG MASTER... I MEAN, PRESIDENT KURAHASHI!
HUH? OH, YES?
DASH
AH...
I HAVE TO WORK. EXCUSE ME!

LIVE A NORMAL LIFE...
I GUESS I'M UNRELIABLE AS A PRESIDENT AFTER ALL.
IT SEEMS SO COLD AND LONELY HERE.
I JUST WANT TO

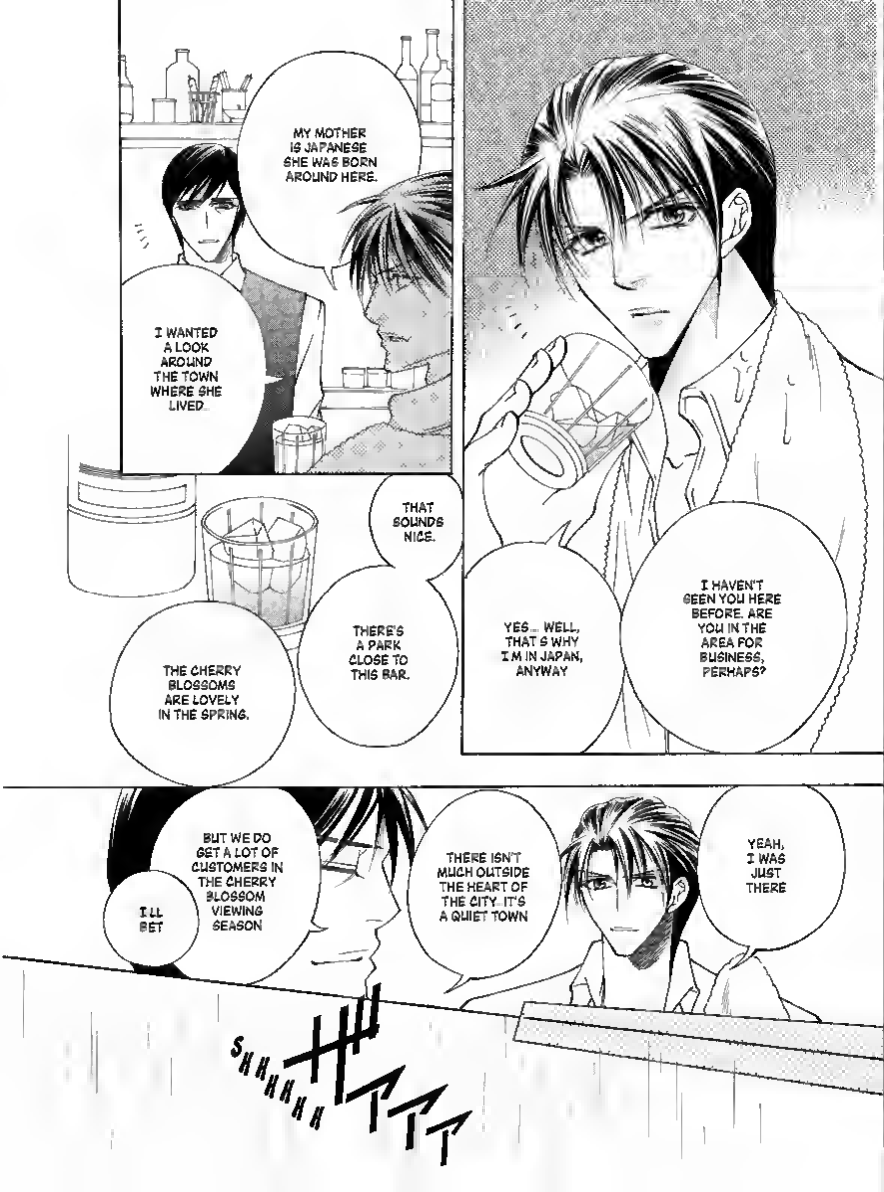
STEP
SO, THIS IS JAPAN...
HAVE YOU BEEN HERE BEFORE?
WHEN I WAS YOUNG, MY MOTHER BROUGHT ME HERE SEVERAL TIMES TO SEE WHERE SHE GREW UP.
BUT I DON'T REALLY REMEMBER IT CLEARLY
I SEE
TAXI

BUT YOU'RE NOT STAYING IN TOKYO?
YES, SIR
TO THE NEAREST TRAIN STATION, PLEASE
HM?
OH SURE
I'D LIKE TO GO SOME-WHERE PRIVATE BEFORE THEN.
SHINAGAWA TOKYO
I'M HAVING DINNER TONIGHT WITH A CERTAIN COMPANY PRESIDENT
ARE YOU GOING SHOP-PING, THEN? SOUNDS NICE
ゴオオ
VROOM
CHECK INTO THE HOTEL FOR ME I'LL BE BACK IN TIME.
UNDER-STOOD

HERE
IT IS
RYU AGE 3
RYU
I DO REMEMBER..
I PLAYED HERE OFTEN..
IT'S PRETTY NICE HERE AFTER ALL
POOR
PATTER
PATTER

L'etoile ☆ Solitaire
A BAR, HUH? "L' ETOILE SOLITAIRE."
PUSH
HELLO!
PERFECT.
AH!
CAFE
IT'S RAINING HARDER THAN I THOUGHT
BETTER FIND SOMEPLACE TO GET OUT OF THE RAIN...
WE'RE NOT OPEN YET
I'M SORRY, SIR...
BUT...
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
OH? IT'S RAINING PRETTY HARD.
I'M JUST TRYING TO STAY DRY.

Y-YES SIR!
TAKAHASHI-KUN, BRING HIM A TOWEL.
WELCOME. PLEASE COME IN OUT OF THE RAIN
PLEASE, USE THIS
THANK YOU.
YOU MUST BE CHILLED. CAN I OFFER YOU SOMETHING TO DRINK?
HOW ABOUT A VODKA ON THE ROCKS?
CERTAINLY
HERE YOU ARE.
THANKS


I HAVEN'T BEEN YOU HERE BEFORE. ARE YOU IN THE AREA FOR BUSINESS, PERHAPS?
YES... WELL, THAT'S WHY I'M IN JAPAN, ANYWAY
MY MOTHER IS JAPANESE SHE WAS BORN AROUND HERE.
I WANTED A LOOK AROUND THE TOWN WHERE SHE LIVED.
THAT SOUNDS NICE.
THERE'S A PARK CLOSE TO THIS BAR.
THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS ARE LOVELY IN THE SPRING.
YEAH, I WAS JUST THERE
THERE ISN'T MUCH OUTSIDE THE HEART OF THE CITY. IT'S A QUIET TOWN
BUT WE DO GET A LOT OF CUSTOMERS IN THE CHERRY BLOSSOM VIEWING SEASON
I'LL BET
SHHHHH
アアア

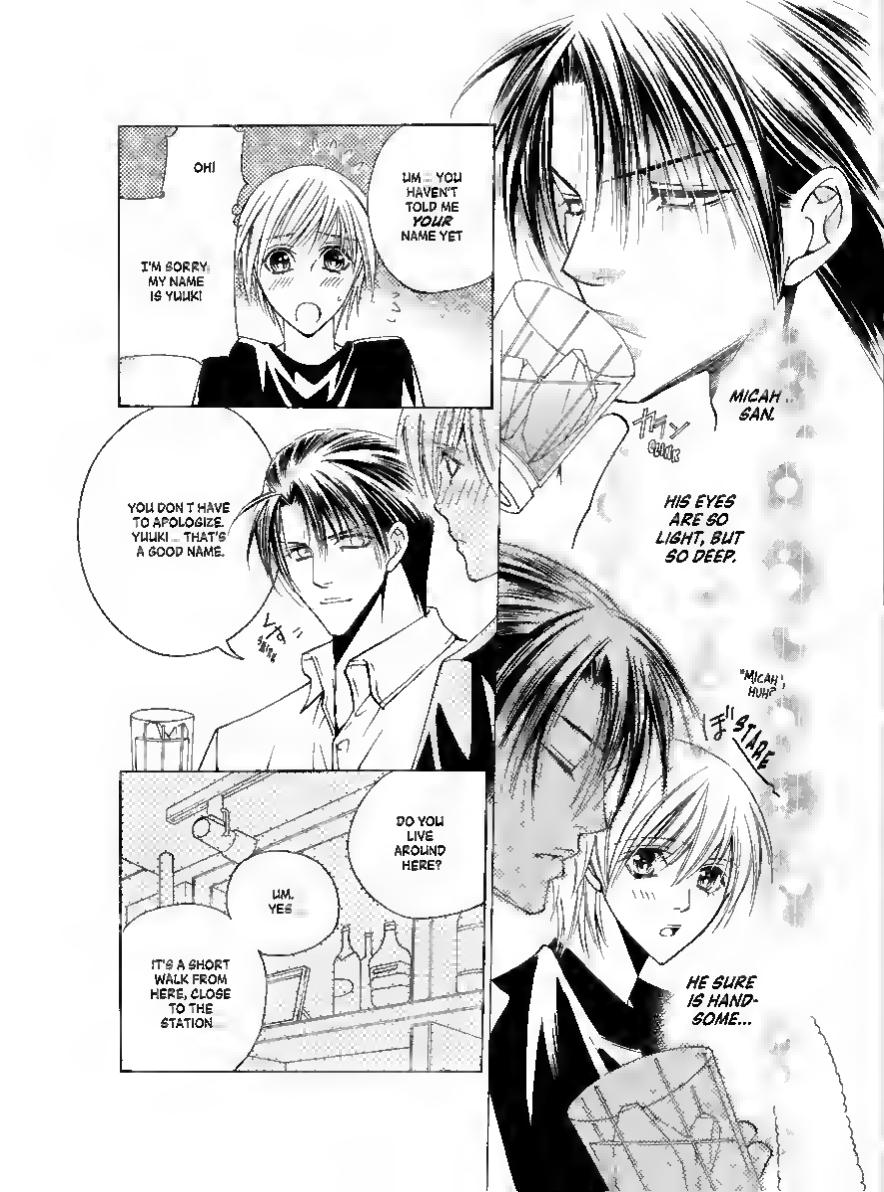
SCHHHH
SAAAAAAAA
トン
STEP
トン
STEP
PSSSH
MAN...
GEEZ, IT'S POURING.
SHOOT
THE WEATHER REPORT THIS MORNING DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT RAIN.
SHOOT
AH...
THERE S
I DON'T WANT TO RUIN MY LIBRARY BOOKS...
キョロ キョロ
IS THERE A CONVENIENCE STORE NEARBY?
EXCUSE ME...
MAYBE I CAN HANG OUT THERE UNTIL THE RAIN STOPS.

AH ..
WELCOME!
AH ...

HELLO
RAINING PRETTY HARD, ISN'T IT?
AH...
Y...
YES... !
BLUSH
MY,
YOU'RE COMPLETELY SOAKED
WAIT HERE, AND I'LL BRING YOU A TOWEL
WHOA!
WHAT DO I DO!?
THIS GOOD LOOKING GUY IS TALKING TO ME!
THE RAIN IT'S VERY ANNOYING...

WHAT SHOULD I SAY?
A FORMAL GREETING, MAYBE?
UM...
SURE...
HEY
YOU CAN SIT NEXT TO ME, IF YOU'D LIKE
I'M SO NERVOUS ALL OF A SUDDEN.
HERE'S YOUR TOWEL
THANK YOU
...

I'D JUST GOTTEN OFF THE BUS FROM THE UNIVERSITY WHEN IT STARTED RAINING
!
THIS IS MY FIRST TIME.
UM. NO
SO, COME HERE OFTEN?
YES... BUT... UM...
AREN'T YOU ALSO JAPANESE?
YEAH
YOU'RE A COLLEGE STUDENT!
I THOUGHT YOU WERE IN HIGH SCHOOL JAPANESE PEOPLE REALLY DO LOOK YOUNG.
I KNOW IT SOUNDS LIKE A GIRL'S NAME IN JAPANESE, BUT IT'S SPELLED M-I-C-A-H
MICAH SAN
I'M HALF JAPANESE, HALF AMERICAN CALL ME MICAH


OH!
I'M SORRY. MY NAME IS YUUKI
UM... YOU HAVEN'T TOLD ME YOUR NAME YET
MICAH... SAN.
CHIK
HIS EYES ARE SO LIGHT, BUT SO DEEP.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO APOLOGIZE, YUUKI... THAT'S A GOOD NAME.
"MICAH"? HUH?
STARE
DO YOU LIVE AROUND HERE?
UM, YES...
IT'S A SHORT WALK FROM HERE, CLOSE TO THE STATION...
HE SURE IS HANDSOME...

IF I LIVED IN JAPAN, I'D PICK A PLACE LIKE THAT
IS THAT SO?
AS I RECALL, THE AREA BY THE STATION IS AN EXCLUSIVE DISTRICT.
A FRIEND OF MINE LIVES THERE. I HEAR IT'S PRETTY EXPENSIVE. YOU MUST BE RATHER WELL OFF
WELL.
IT'S NOT LIKE.
WILL MAKE YOU HAPPY
JUST LIVING IN A NICE HOUSE
YES, THAT'S TRUE.

THAT'S TRUE BUT...
BUT DON'T YOU ALSO THINK THAT, MATERIAL WEALTH HELPS BROADEN THE CHOICES YOU CAN MAKE IN LIFE?
GOING ON VACATION WITH MY FAMILY,
PASSING THE TIME WITH MY FRIENDS...
I'D RATHER LIVE A MORE NORMAL LIFE.
...
I KNOW "NORMAL" IS A RELATIVE TERM, BUT
HOW CAN I EXPLAIN IT?
WHAT'S WITH ME?
SOMETIMES IT FEELS LIKE I DON'T BELONG, IN OR OUT OF MY OWN HOUSE...
WHAT AM I SAYING?

EVERYDAY IS SO LONELY
I JUST MET THIS MAN...
YUUKI...
BE FRIENDS FROM NOW ON?
LET'S...
I DON'T KNOW JAPAN VERY WELL,
...HUH?
BUT IF YOU COME TO AMERICA I CAN SHOW YOU AROUND SOMETIME

YOU'LL COME SPEND TIME WITH ME, WON'T YOU?
Y...
YES
MICAH-SAN...
THE PLEASURE'S ALL MINE.
I'M GLAD. THANK YOU VERY MUCH
PiPiPiPi
BEEP BEEP

RESTAURANT
MICAH...
WHERE ARE YOU?
I UNDER-STAND
EVERYONE'S GATHERED ALREADY
EXCUSE ME A SECOND
OH, RICHARD
I'LL BE THERE SOON!
I'M ON MY WAY!
LOOKS LIKE I LOST TRACK OF TIME.
I HAVE TO GO
OH...
I SEE...
I HOPE TO SEE YOU AGAIN
I FEEL A LITTLE LONELY ALREADY.

TAKE CARE. GOOD-BYE.
GOOD-BYE
OKAY... RIGHT HERE.
LET'S MEET AGAIN! IS RIGHT HERE ALL RIGHT?
YEAH
CLICK
SHUT
..

BUT STILL...
HE SEEMS SO... MATURE
I'M SO HAPPY...
BILL, PLEASE!
AND SO COMPOSED. COULD HE REALLY USE A FRIEND LIKE ME?
I'VE SOMEHOW MADE AN AMAZING NEW FRIEND.
WOW!!
WHAT DO I DO!?
YUUKI'S INNER VOICE

WORRY
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
I DIDN'T EVEN THANK HIM...
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
YOU'LL SEE HIM AGAIN, WON'T YOU?
YOU CAN TREAT HIM NEXT TIME
YES YOU'RE RIGHT
THE MAN WHO JUST LEFT HAS COVERED IT, SIR
WHAT? REALLY?!
WHY DON'T YOU TAKE THIS, AS A MEMENTO OF YOUR VISIT...
L'etoile ★ Solitaire
IN LIEU OF A BUSINESS CARD

OH WELL. I'LL GET TO SEE HIM AGAIN IF I COME BACK HERE.
WHAT SHOULD I TALK TO MICAH ABOUT WHEN I SEE HIM NEXT TIME?
THANK YOU VERY MUCH
TODAY TURNED OUT TO BE A GREAT DAY.
AMERICA, MAYBE?
I DIDN'T EVEN ASK HIM WHERE IN AMERICA HE LIVES.
MY HEART FEELS A BIT LIGHTER.
AH... THE RAIN IS STOPPING
WE'RE "FRIENDS" NOW, AFTER ALL.

MIGAH! YOU'RE LATE!
YEAH I'M SORRY I WORRIED YOU.
WAIT...
AREN'T YOU GOING TO CHANGE?
YOU DON'T THINK I CAN GO LIKE THIS?
OF COURSE NOT! PLEASE, CHANGE INTO THIS!
WHAT A PAIN.
GOOD-NESS...
WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING ALL THIS TIME?
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU TO LOSE TRACK OF TIME...

YOUR ATTITUDE SEEMS DIFFERENT. I FIND IT SUSPICIOUS
DO YOU? I HAVEN'T CHANGED AT ALL.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I...
COME ON, RICHARD, IT'S TIME FOR BUSINESS
HMM ?
ACTUALLY... IT'S PRIVATE
WELL, THAT'S FINE...
BUT NO FOOLING AROUND WITH SOME WOMAN, ALL RIGHT?
I UNDERSTAND, RICHARD WHAT'S GOT YOU IN SUCH A HUFF?
IT'S GOOD TO MEET YOU, OKADA-SAMA
I AM MICAH RYU REMMINGTON, OF SAKURA GARDEN SUITES
PLEASED TO MEET YOU

WHEN I THINK ABOUT YUUKI, MY THOUGHTS JUST DRIFT APART.
LET'S PROCEED TO THE BUSINESS AT HAND
BY COOPERATING WITH US, WE CAN HELP STRENGTHEN YOUR ORGANIZATION—
IT'S STRANGE.
HE WAS CUTE, LIKE A LOST PUPPY.
MAYBE IT WAS SEEING HIM STUMBLE INTO THAT BAR.
MY APOLOGIES
YOU SMILE QUITE A BIT MORE THAN MOST PRESIDENTS, MR. REMMINGTON
THANK YOU.
NOT AT ALL. I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO LEARNING MORE ABOUT YOUR COMPANY

SEVERAL DAYS LATER AT KURAHASHI HEADQUARTERS
MURMUR
MURMUR
IT'S MAKING ME NERVOUS...
THE ATMOS-PHERE SEEMS DIFFERENT...
THERE'S NO NEED FOR CONCERN
JUST DO AS I SAY, AND YOU'LL BE FINE.

OUR OPPONENT IN THIS TAKE-OVER IS REMMINGTON, SOME TIMES CALLED THE ICE DRAGON. HE'S FAMOUS FOR HIS INTIMIDATION TACTICS
THANK YOU, WADA-SAN
OKAY...
AM I GOING TO BE OKAY?
WE CANNOT LET HIM PUSH US AROUND, OR HE'LL TAKE ADVANTAGE OF US
THEY SAY HE'LL USE ANY MEANS NECESSARY TO ADVANCE HIS BUSINESS
IN ORDER TO KEEP HIM FROM GETTING HIS WAY, WE'LL HAVE TO BE VERY CAREFUL ABOUT WHAT WE TELL HIM
I'M...
I HAVE TO...
GO TO THE BATH-ROOM.
PLEASE BE QUICK.

WADA-SAN IS USUALLY SO NICE FOR HIM TO SPEAK LIKE THAT..
KNOCK KNOCK
THUD
AH! EXCUSE ME...
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT—
THIS REMMINGTON MUST BE ONE COLD BUSINESSMAN...

HUH...?
MICAH-SAN...?
YU-YUUKI...?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
BUT... WHY?
WHAT ABOUT YOU?

OH, THIS MUST BE...
A ALL RIGHT
LET'S HEAD FOR THE CONFER-ENCE ROOM.
ONLY THOSE IN THE MEETING SHOULD BE HERE TODAY...!
Y...
YES...
THE YOUNG PRESIDENT OF KURAHASHI, YUUKI KURAHASHI, NO?
THIS IS MICAH RYU REMMINGTON, PRESIDENT OF SAKURA GARDEN SUITES
THE YOUNG PRESI-DENT OF KURAHASHI?
MICAH!
YUUKI...?
I'M HIS EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT, RICHARD WRIGHT

WE SHALL SEE YOU IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM SHORTLY
YUUKI-SAN
...THAT MEANS, THE MAN TRYING TO BUY OUR HOTEL IS... MICAH-SAN HIMSELF.
THAT CAN'T BE...
Y-YES.
IT WAS A COMPLETE COINCIDENCE
HAVE YOU BY CHANCE MET REMMINGTON BEFORE?
I DON'T BELIEVE IT...
MICAH-SAN IS THE PRESIDENT OF SAKURA GARDEN SUITES...?!
FORGIVE ME FOR SAYING SO, BUT REMMINGTON HAS NO INTEREST IN ANYTHING EXCEPT BUSINESS
I DOUBT THAT IT WAS MERE "COINCIDENCE."

I FINALLY MADE A FRIEND, TOO...
BUT I'M AFRAID THE WORLD IS NOT THAT KIND OF PLACE
I FINALLY...
IT MAY HAVE BEEN SOME PLOY ON HIS PART TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF YOU
THAT...
...CAN'T BE..
I KNOW YOU LIKE TO BELIEVE THAT ANYONE WHO ACTS KINDLY CAN BE A GOOD PERSON
YES
I'LL BE CAREFUL

HE LOOKS SO TIMID AND INEXPERIENCED THIS LL BE EASY
STIED
MICAH, DID YOU SEE? THAT WAS KURAHASHI'S PRESIDENT
STIED
WILL YOU BE QUIET?
I WANT TO GET MY THOUGHTS IN ORDER.
WITH A PRESIDENT LIKE THAT,
OUR TAKEOVER IS MORE LIKE A RESCUE.
AT ANY RATE,
UNDERSTOOD.
IT'S TIME
RICHARD.
CHAK

BA-
DUM
IN THE MATTER OF SAKURA GARDEN SUITES...AND THE TAKEOVER OF KURAHASHI...
NOW THAT BOTH PARTIES HAVE TAKEN THEIR SEATS...
MICAH-SAN...
WE CAN BEGIN AN OPEN EXCHANGE OF OPINIONS...
YUUKI...
カタン

KURAHASHI GROUP INSISTS THAT SAKURA GARDEN SUITES PRESERVE THE POSITIONS OF THE ENTIRE UPPER MANAGEMENT
WADA-SAN...
B-BUT..
WE CURRENTLY HOLD 30% OF KURAHASHI'S TOTAL STOCK
CALM DOWN, RICHARD
THIS IS THE GENERAL OPINION SHARED BY ALL OUR EMPLOYEES
WE DON'T WANT TO CREATE ANY UNNECESSARY HOSTILITY

IN AMERICA THERE ARE A GROWING NUMBER OF PEOPLE INTERESTED IN A TRADITIONAL VACATION TO JAPAN
THEY MAY REST EASIER STAYING IN A HOTEL THAT IS ALREADY STAFFED BY AMERICANS
EVENTUALLY, THERE WON'T BE JAPANESE GUESTS INTERESTED IN STAYING HERE.
UNTIL NOW, YOU'VE OVERLOOKED THE ADVANTAGE OF ATTRACTING FOREIGN SIGHT-SEERS. THIS IS A GREAT BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY TO CHANGE THAT.
MICAH-SAN...
BUT...
WHAT DOES THE PRESIDENT OF KURAHASHI THINK?

MICAH-SAN IS LOOKING AT ME.
LOOKING RIGHT AT ME JUST LIKE BEFORE, WITH THOSE KIND EYES...
I'D LIKE TO HEAR YOUR OPINION
HUH ...?
TU-THUMP
MICAH-SAN...
ME...?

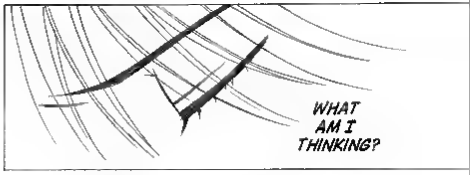
I...
CLENCH
PRESIDENT KURAHASHI!
GASP
MY OPINION...
IS THE SAME AS WADA DESCRIBED A MOMENT AGO...
I CAN'T IMAGINE ANY COOPERATION BETWEEN YOUR COMPANY AND OURS.
MY HEART...
IS SO CONFUSED...

WHAT A STUBBORN COMPANY
THAT MAN WADA SEEMED MORE COMPETENT THAN THE PRESIDENT THIS MAY TAKE A WHILE
WELL, IT WASN'T BAD FOR THEIR FIRST RESPONSE
THERE! JUST NOW! YOU'VE BEEN AWFULLY SOFT LATELY
YOU THINK SO?
YES, I DO!
YOU'RE NOT HOLDING BACK BECAUSE YOUR OPPONENT IS SO YOUNG, ARE YOU?
AFTER THE CONFERENCE

AND THAT'S WHY YOU'RE MY SUPERIOR
I HAVE FAITH IN YOU
OF COURSE NOT.
I NEVER MAKE MY MOVE UNTIL I'VE FINISHED CALCULATING.
YEAH
YOU KNOW THAT BY NOW, DON'T YOU?
...YUUKI...
OF COURSE

WHEN HE FIRST SPOKE, HIS VOICE WAS SO TIMID AND ALMOST SHAKING...
THAT PASSIVE PERSONALITY OF HIS ISN'T SUITED TO BUSINESS AT ALL.
WHAT IS THIS TIGHTNESS IN MY CHEST?
I FEEL LIKE I W. NT TO PROTECT HIM, WH.TEVER IT TAKES...

SIR! IT'S A CALL FROM ALEXANDRIA.
!


WHAT AM I THINKING?

I CAN'T START HAVING SYMPATHY TOWARDS A BUSINESS COMPETITOR.
BEEP Pi Pi BEEP Pi Pi

KURAHASHI HEADQUARTERS, PRESIDENT'S OFFICE
YOU SPOKE VERY WELL IN THE MEETING, YUUKI-SAN.
I'M SURE THE OTHERS WILL REEVALUATE THEIR OPINIONS OF YOU AS WELL.
HMMM...
HAVE CONFIDENCE IN YOURSELF, AND GOOD LUCK WITH TOMORROW'S MEETING!
YOU HOLD OUR FATE IN YOUR HANDS, YUUKI-SAN.
WADA-SAN
YES?

YOU CAN LEAVE TOMORROW TO ATTEND CLASS
THERE'S BEEN A CHANGE OF PLANS
HUH?
CHECK
I UNDERSTAND...
HUH...?
SO...WHEN WILL THE NEXT MEETING BE?
IT SEEMS REMMINGTON WAS CALLED OVERSEAS WITH URGENT BUSINESS
I DON'T KNOW IT'S UP TO THEM.
OF COURSE, WE'VE ALREADY FULFILLED OUR OBLIGATION TO THEM THROUGH THIS MEETING.
AH...
IT WOULD BE NICE IF HIS "BUSINESS" KEEPS THE TAKEOVER FROM HAPPENING AT ALL.

NO...
ドキン
ドキン
I... DON'T WANT THAT...
YUUKI-SAN!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
DASH
BUT... THAT MEANS...
ドキン
ドキン
I MAY NEVER SEE MICAH-SAN AGAIN...?
I'M...
I'M GOING TO TAKE A WALK AROUND THE HOTEL
CREAK
COME BACK SOON!

I DON'T KNOW, BUT...
MICAH-SAN?!
SLAM
SLIDE
ガラッ
CAN I...
MAKE IT TO HIM IF I RUN?
IS THIS THE RIGHT THING TO DO? IS IT WRONG?

EVEN IF IT WAS JUST A PLOY, I...
YUUKI —!
MICAH-SAN..!!
I WANT TO SEE HIM AGAIN!
I...

オオオ
オオオ
VROOM
MICAH-SAN...
I COULDN'T SAY ANY-THING...
I'M ALWAYS... LIKE THAT...
I ALWAYS STALL,
HE'S GONE...
AND END UP NOT DOING ANYTHING

AH...
Until the next time! Solitaire ☆
OH!
UM...
YOU ARE...?
SIR...?
IT'S ABOUT THAT DARK HAIRED AMERICAN GENTLEMAN WHO JUST LEFT...
I'M MATSUMOTO, THE RECEPTIONIST.
"BUT PLEASE GIVE THIS TO PRESIDENT KURAHASHI."
HE SAID, "SOMEONE I KNOW HAS BEEN IN AN ACCIDENT, SO I HAVE TO RETURN HOME."
カサ

YOU...
MICAH-SAN...
YOU WERE THINKING OF ME AFTER ALL...!

Chapter 2

L'étoile
L'étoile
Solitaire

JAPAN
W UNIVERSITY CAMPUS
AH .
NEW LEAVES.
LOOKS LIKE SPRINGTIME

MMM, FEELS GOOD...
THREE MONTHS HAVE PASSED
I RETURNED TO MY PEACEFUL LIFE AS A COLLEGE STUDENT...
AFTER MICAH-SAN RETURNED HOME,
ANOTHER JAPANESE COMPANY BOUGHT KURAHASHI AND RENAMED IT WHITE NIGHT.
THINGS BECAME COMPLICATED...
MY PHYSICAL CONDITION WORSENED DUE TO STRESS, AND I WAS TEMPORARILY SUSPENDED FROM MANAGEMENT.
THE COMPANY'S NOW RUN MOSTLY BY MY UNCLE AND WADA-SAN.
CALM, QUIET DAYS— BUT IS THIS REALLY ALL RIGHT?
EVERYONE ELSE IS WORKING SO HARD...

MICAH-SAN...
I WONDER WHAT YOU'RE DOING NOW...
IS THAT TRUE?
WHAT? THE REAL THING?
I READ ABOUT YOU IN NEWSWEEK.
IS THERE, SOME FAMOUS PERSON OR SOMETHING...?
WOW! HOW EXCITING
HE'S ONE OF THE 100 TOP ENTREPRENEURS IN AMERICA!
!!

MICAH-SAN...?!
パサッ
DO YOU SPEAK JAPANESE?

...!
IT'S BEEN A WHILE, HASN'T IT?
YUUKI!
EXCUSE ME, I NEED TO GET THROUGH.
AHHH!
MICAH-SAN...?! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I CAME TO FIND YOU.
I WANTED TO SEE YOU.
AM I INTERRUPTING ANYTHING?
ドキン
N... NOT AT ALL...
OF COURSE NOT...!
BUT, YOU MUST BE SO BUSY WITH WORK.
IT'S ALL RIGHT I HAVE AN EXCELLENT ASSISTANT
OH...
AFTERNOON BREAK IS OVER.

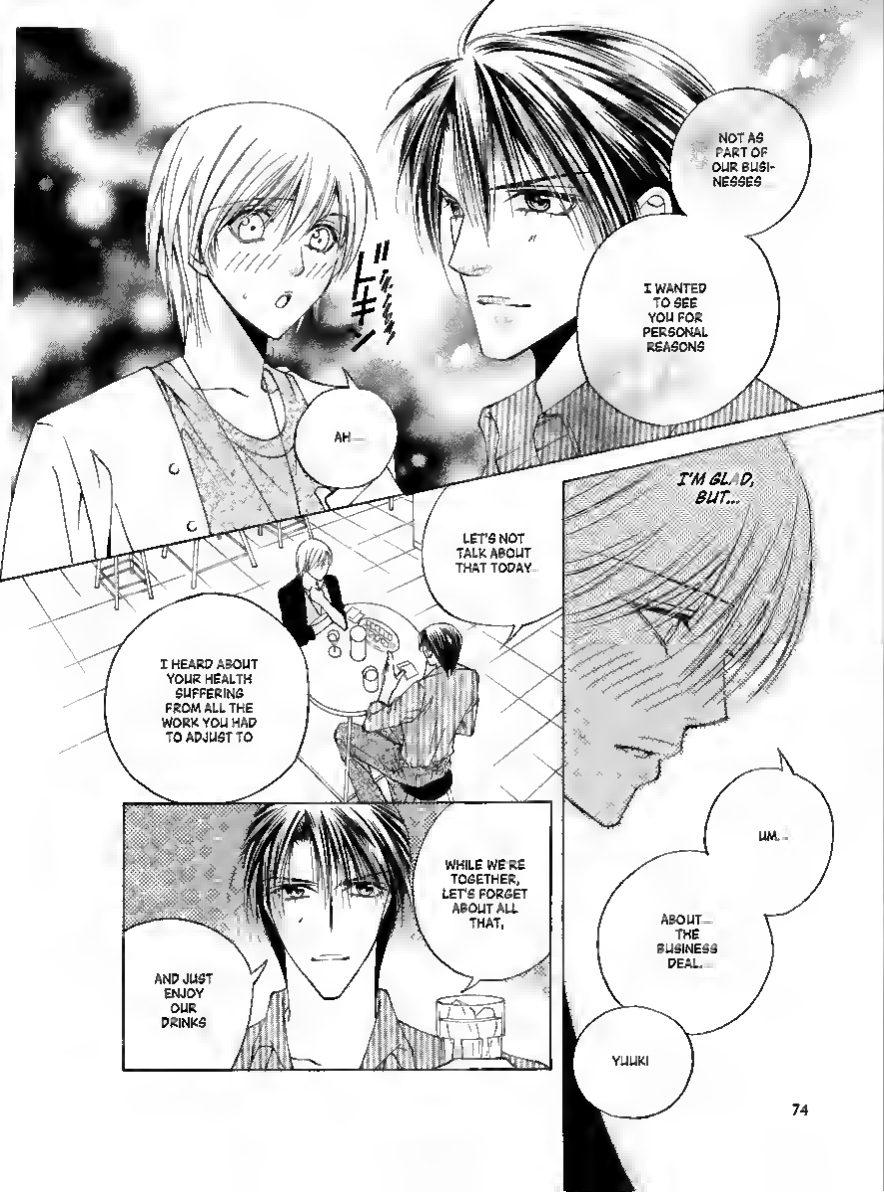
I UNDERSTAND DON'T WORRY; I HAVE THE ENTIRE DAY OFF...
THIS IS MY FIRST TIME IN A JAPANESE UNIVERSITY, SO I MAY JUST HAVE A LOOK AROUND
COULD YOU WAIT FOR A WHILE?
I'M SORRY, BUT I HAVE TO GO TO CLASS
I DON'T HAVE ANY PLANS LATER
WELL, EXCUSE ME...
I'LL SEE YOU LATER!
I'M NOT... IMAGINING THIS, AM I...?
WOW WHAT A SURPRISE ...!
ドキ
ドキ
ドキ

I TOLD RICHARD IT WAS NO USE.
YOU'RE GOING OUT AGAIN?!
...WHAT?
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
STEP
I HAVE TODAY OFF, DON'T I? I CAN DO WHAT I PLEASE.
YOU SEEM INTENT ON LENGTHENING OUR STAY HERE.
—WHAT A NICE BREEZE

MICAH.
YOU ACTED STRANGE THE LAST TIME WE CAME TO JAPAN.
WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE YOU UP TO?
IT WAS I WHO WENT TO THE TROUBLE OF SHIFTING YOUR SCHEDULE FOR YOU.
I JUST WANT TO RELAX ONCE IN A WHILE. I'M TIRED.
THEN RELAX IN THE HOTEL!
OSUN
NEXT TIME, I'LL DO IT
I HATE ASKING RICHARD TO TAKE CARE OF THINGS EVERY TIME...
BUT I WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO SEE YUUKI AT ALL IF I DIDN'T DO THIS.

L'etoile ☆ Solitaire
OH!
IT'S THE TWO OF YOU FROM THAT RAINY DAY
I'M GLAD YOU WERE ABLE TO MEET UP AGAIN.
YES!
HELLO!
WELCOME TO...
SLIDE
CHEERS!
A TOAST, TO OUR REUNION
I'M REALLY GLAD THAT WE'RE TOGETHER AGAIN
M...
ME, TOO!

...WHAT?
THE TRUTH IS...
I TRIED CALLING KURAHASHI SEVERAL TIMES
WADA-SAN SAID YOU DIDN'T WANT TO SPEAK TO ME...
WH... WHEN DID YOU CALL?
WADA-SAN NEVER TOLD ME...
HMM... I THOUGHT SO
BUT I WANTED TO CONFIRM IT WITH YOU
AND SO I FINALLY CAME TO SEE YOU MYSELF


NOT AS PART OF OUR BUSINESSES
I WANTED TO SEE YOU FOR PERSONAL REASONS
トキン
AH...
I'M GLAD, BUT...
LET'S NOT TALK ABOUT THAT TODAY
I HEARD ABOUT YOUR HEALTH SUFFERING FROM ALL THE WORK YOU HAD TO ADJUST TO
UM...
ABOUT... THE BUSINESS DEAL...
YUUKI
WHILE WE'RE TOGETHER, LET'S FORGET ABOUT ALL THAT,
AND JUST ENJOY OUR DRINKS

I WAS ALREADY CHARMED BY YOU THE FIRST TIME WE MET.

FOR YOU TO CHANGE YOUR BUSINESS SCHEDULE LIKE THAT.
IT MUST HAVE BEEN SOMEONE IMPORTANT TO YOU,
THAT WAS WHEN...
I LEARNED THAT MY FIANCÉ, ALEX, HAD BEEN HOSPITALIZED.
WELL...
YES
THAT'S RIGHT
BUT I WAS THERE TO LOOK AFTER HER, AND HELP WITH HER REHABILITATION.
IT WASN'T TERRIBLY SERIOUS,
?
IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T LOVE ALEX...
WE BECAME ENGAGED FOR OUR MUTUAL BENEFIT.
BUT ALL ALONG I WAS THINKING OF..

CLACK
THANK YOU!
ブロオオオ…
VROOM
止まれ
40
YEAH...
A BIT DRUNK, ARE WE?
YOUR FACE IS RED
OH... SORRY, I DRIFTED OFF FOR A MOMENT THERE
MICAH-SAN ?
I DON'T DRINK THAT OFTEN, REALLY.
BUT SOMETIMES I GET CARRIED AWAY
I HATE TO SAY IT, BUT WE'D BETTER GET GOING.
I'D BET BOTH OF OUR ASSISTANTS ARE IRRITATED BY NOW
YOU'RE RIGHT

よたっ
グラッ
!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YU... YUUKI
ARE YOU NOT FEELING WELL? YOU ALL RIGHT?
YES...
ドキ ドキ
WHOA...
ポス flop
SORRY
I'M FINE...
YES...

YES...
ACTUALLY .
I FEEL STRANGELY LIGHT-HEADED...
YUUKI..
NO, I...
HE'S .. SO CUTE.

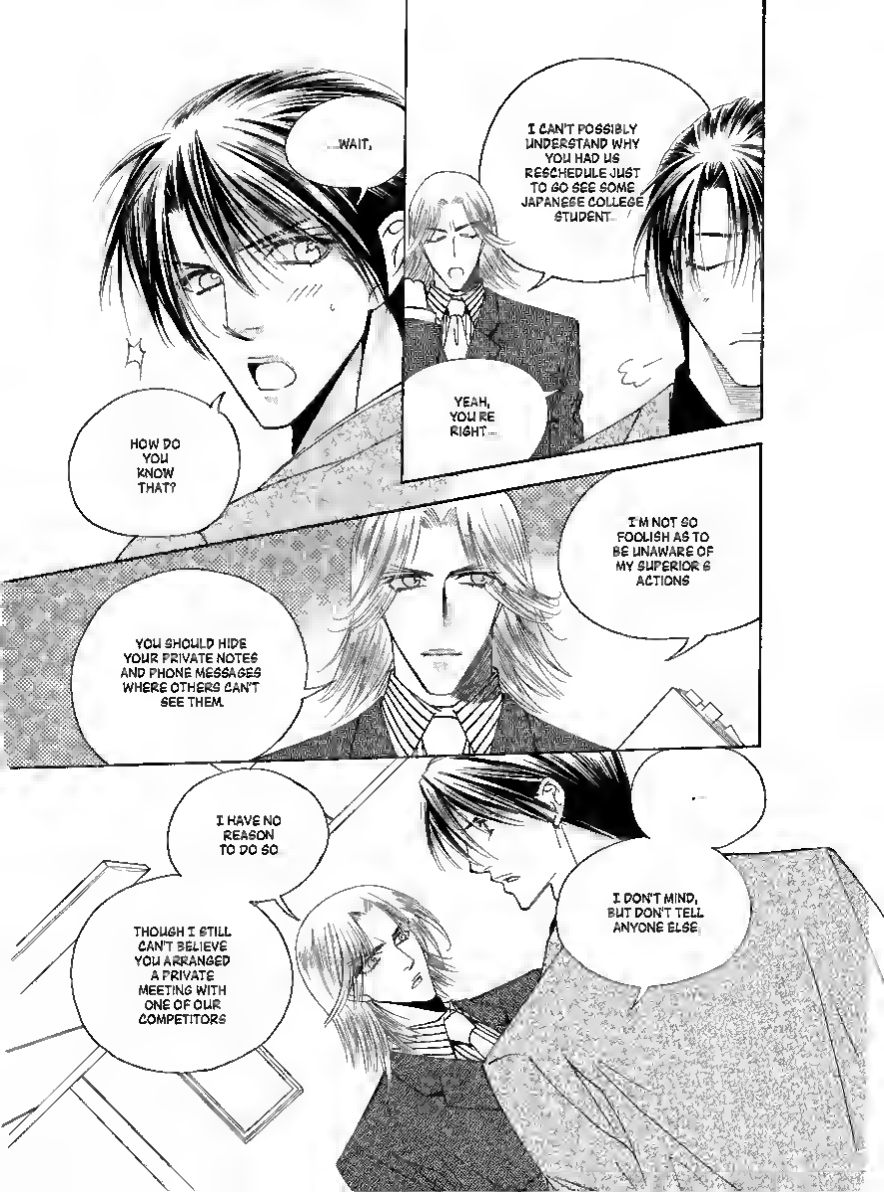
WHAT.. ?!
?!
MICAH-SAN.

I'M SCARED...!
FLINCH
ST--
SHOVE
UM...
I...
THAT IS...
AH...
YUUKI...
WHAT IS THIS...?
YOU...
CAN'T DO THAT...

!
OF COURSE HE WOULD.
HE'S JUST A BOY...
OF COURSE HE WOULDN'T ACCEPT ME.
I'VE BEEN... REJECTED?
AND MY... AFFECTION...
I'M SORRY
OF COURSE...
PSHOOOO
SCHHH
AH...
TURN
AH... I'M...
I'M TAKING THE BUS HOME.
YUUK!...

OH...
OKAY...
ブロオオ
VROOM
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT, JUST NOW.
I HOPE WE MEET AGAIN, THROUGH OUR BUSINESS DEALINGS
ゴオオオオオオ
VROOM
RATTLE
JUST NOW... MICAH-SAN... KISSED ME, DIDN'T HE...?
THAT SOBERED ME UP PRETTY QUICK...
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP

I JUST...
DON'T UNDERSTAND...
WAS THAT A GOOD-BYE KISS...?
HE MAY BE AN AMERICAN, BUT STILL...
BUT WHY,
WOULD HE DO THAT?
COMPOSE YOURSELF, MICAH.
WHAT HAPPENED? YOU LEFT IN SUCH HIGH SPIRITS!
YOU WOULDN'T UNDER-STAND...
I'M SURE I WOULDN'T.
SIGH
GLOOM...


...WAIT,
I CAN'T POSSIBLY UNDERSTAND WHY YOU HAD US RESCHEDULE JUST TO GO SEE SOME JAPANESE COLLEGE STUDENT
YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT...
HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?
I'M NOT SO FOOLISH AS TO BE UNAWARE OF MY SUPERIOR'S ACTIONS
YOU SHOULD HIDE YOUR PRIVATE NOTES AND PHONE MESSAGES WHERE OTHERS CAN'T SEE THEM.
I HAVE NO REASON TO DO SO
I DON'T MIND, BUT DON'T TELL ANYONE ELSE.
THOUGH I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE YOU ARRANGED A PRIVATE MEETING WITH ONE OF OUR COMPETITORS

AFTER SEEING THAT EXPRESSION OF HIS...
I'LL HAVE TO PUT HIM OUT OF MY MIND FOR A WHILE...
PLEASE DON'T GET TOO INVOLVED
YEAH
I KNOW
EVEN BEFORE ALL THIS HE WAS NO GOOD FOR MICAH.
I SHOULD TAKE MEASURES.

YUUKI'S HOME
STARE
MICAH-SAN...
IT'S BEEN...
BOTHERING ME...
WHY DID HE...
KISS ME LIKE THAT ...?
MICAH-SAN...

WE NEED LAB COATS FOR CHEMISTRY CLASS
YUUKI'S YOUNGER BROTHER, SHO KURAHASHI A HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR
BRO!!
ガラッ
GWACK
WAS HE TEASING ME?
JUST A MINUTE.
AH.
YEAH...
I LOST MINE, BUT YOU STILL HAVE YOURS FROM HIGH SCHOOL, RIGHT?
CAN I BORROW IT?
HMM...
WHAT'S WRONG?
BRO?
YOU SEEM OFF...
BUT, HE DOESN'T SEEM LIKE THE KIND OF PERSON TO DO THAT

HMMM...
I SEE.
I HAD MY FIRST,
IN MIDDLE SCHOOL
WHAT...?! REALLY?
I WAS SURPRISED BY BEING KISSED SO SUDDENLY...
I'VE NEVER DONE IT BEFORE...
WHAT? SERIOUSLY?
EXPECTANT EYES
GLEAM
GLEAM
S... SO...
SO HOW WAS IT?!
GLEAM
UM...
YOU NEED TO GET OUT MORE.

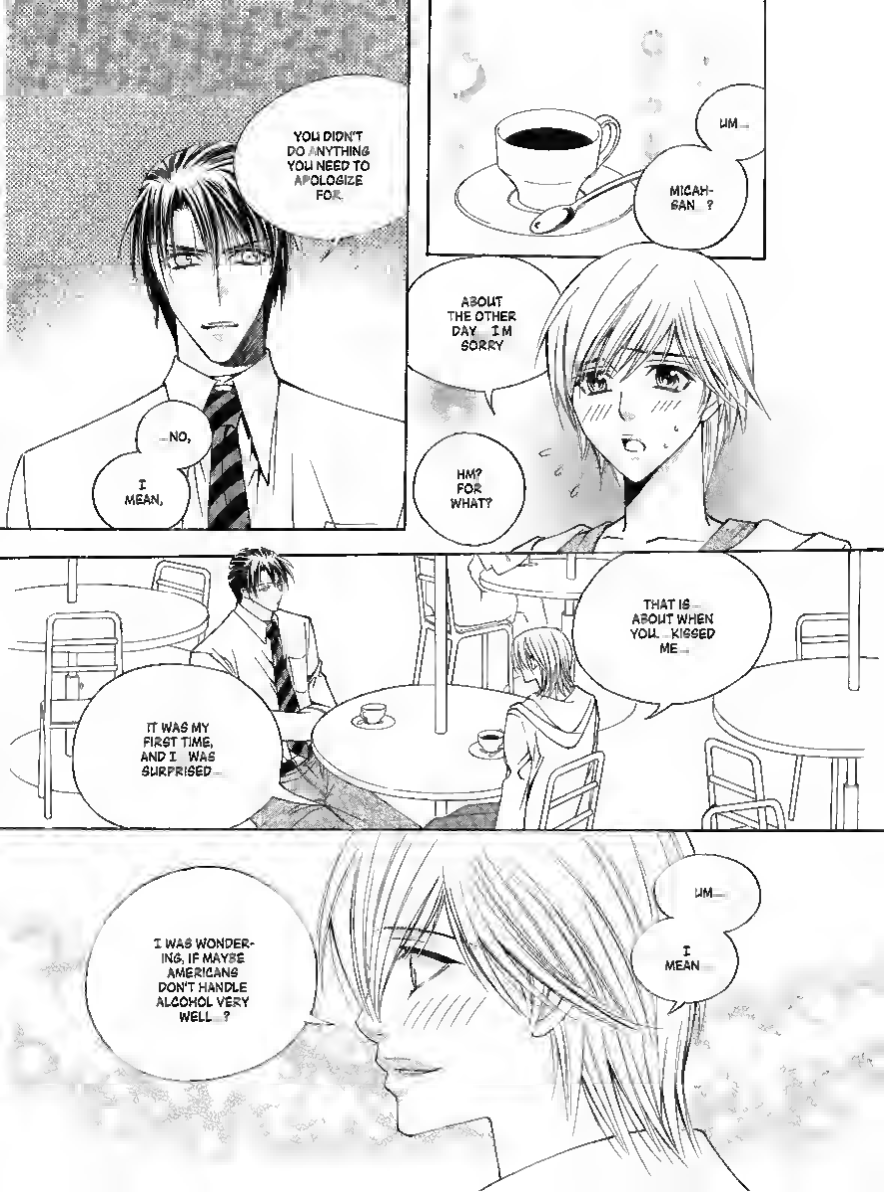
IT'S NOT MY FAULT
I NEVER HAD TIME TO PLAY AROUND—
I WAS THE HEIR, SO I HAD TO LEARN DIFFERENT THINGS
AS SECOND SON I GUESS I HAD PLENTY OF TIME.
— BUT ANYWAY,
I BET THAT AMERICAN WHO KISSED YOU,
WAS JUST DRUNK.
HUH?
IT HAPPENS ALL THE TIME, DOESN'T IT? GUY GETS DRUNK AND JUST KISSES SOMEONE
I'M SURE THAT'S WHAT IT WAS

YEAH...
BUT...
I SHOULD GO APOLOGIZE, SHOULDN'T I?
YOU'RE RIGHT!
YOU ALWAYS OVER-THINK EVERYTHING
Y..
YEAH...
THINKING ABOUT IT NOW, MICAH-SAN MUST HAVE BEEN IN SUCH A DIFFICULT POSITION...
I... TOOK HIM SERIOUSLY AND PUSHED HIM AWAY PRETTY HARD
HUH..?
I'M GOING NOW!!
DASH
...OH, BROTHER...

...MICAH-SAN.
STEP
YOU'LL PROBABLY BE SURPRISED IF I JUST SHOW UP, HUH...?
HM...? WHERE IS REMMINGTON STAYING?
I GOT THE INFORMATION ON MICAH-SAN FROM WADA-SAN.
WHAT IF MICAH-SAN AND I FIGHT AGAIN?
THE REASON WADA-SAN KNEW OF HIS HOTEL,
WAS BECAUSE OF OUR BUSINESS DEALINGS IN THE PAST... OR SO HE SAYS.
I DON'T EVER WANT TO REPEAT THAT...
..

...!
OH ...!
IT'S MICAH-SAN!
IS HE EATING LUNCH...?
I PROBABLY SHOULDN'T INTERRUPT THEM...
HE'S... LOOKING THIS WAY...
!
YUUKI!

DON'T WORRY I HAVE SOME TIME NOW.
IN THAT CASE, I'LL HAVE TO GIVE UP MY SEAT.
PLEASE DO, RICHARD.
...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
WELL, I... UM...
HMPH.
I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU... UM...
BUT IF YOU'RE WORKING, IT'S ALL RIGHT.
NOT AT ALL.


UM...
MICAH-SAN...?
ABOUT THE OTHER DAY... I'M SORRY
HM? FOR WHAT?
YOU DIDN'T DO ANYTHING YOU NEED TO APOLOGIZE FOR.
NO, I MEAN,
THAT IS... ABOUT WHEN YOU... KISSED ME...
IT WAS MY FIRST TIME, AND I... WAS SURPRISED...
UM... I MEAN...
I WAS WONDERING, IF MAYBE AMERICANS DON'T HANDLE ALCOHOL VERY WELL...?

I'M SORRY I TOOK IT SO SERIOUSLY
HUH?
!
YUUKI...
SIGH
AND THAT'S WHY THAT HAPPENED?
REALLY? I THOUGHT SO
...YOU'RE RIGHT, I DID DRINK TOO MUCH THAT NIGHT
I DON'T REALLY REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED
THERE'S NO WAY THAT SMALL AMOUNT OF ALCOHOL COULD GET ME DRUNK.
NOT TO MENTION I WOULDN'T HAVE, WITH YUUKI THERE...
I'M SORRY IF I DID ANYTHING RUDE

I WANT HIM TO KNOW HOW I FEEL.
MICAH...
SAN..?
EVEN IF IT MEANS BEING REJECTED...
WHAT...
IS IT ...?
THE TRUTH,
YUUKI,
YUUKI...
IS THAT I...
IT LOOKS LIKE HE DOESN'T REALIZE AFTER ALL.
YUUKI...
BUT... I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE IT LIKE THIS.
PLEASE, LISTEN TO ME

!!
〈MICAH!!?〉
〈HERE YOU ARE!〉
〈I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU!〉
*NOTE. 〈〉 IN ENGLISH.
?!
〈SINCE YESTERDAY〉
〈MY DOCTOR SAID I SHOULD TRY RELAXING AT THE HOT SPRINGS TO HELP MY RECOVERY FROM THE ACCIDENT〉
〈A ALEX!? HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN JAPAN?〉

〈NOT AS MUCH AS YOU, I'M SURE〉
〈OH MY〉
〈WHO IS THIS ADORABLE JAPANESE BOY?〉
SHOULD I.. SPEAK ENGLISH...?
〈THIS IS YUUKI KURAHASHI〉
〈MY FRIEND, AND A BUSINESS ASSOCIATE.〉
〈I HEAR YOU'VE BEEN QUITE SELFISH HERE IN JAPAN.〉
〈POOR RICHARD MUST BE AT A LOSS〉
〈PL...〉
〈PLEASED TO MEET YOU...〉
SHAKE
〈NICE TO MEET YOU, HON.〉
〈AH...〉
ALEXANDRIA GRANT, HEIRESS TO THE GRANT FAMILY

YUUKI,
THIS IS MISS ALEXANDRIA GRANT...
〈MY MY〉
〈DID YOU INTRODUCE ME AS THE FUTURE MRS. REMMINGTON〉
〈CAN'T WE JUST DROP THE "FIANCÉ" PART?〉
WHAT ...?!
DID SHE JUST SAY... FIANCÉ?
〈I'M SORRY, ALEX, BUT WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF SOMETHING.〉
〈IF YOU NEED SOMETHING, CAN'T IT WAIT UNTIL LATER?〉
〈WHAT?!〉
〈HOW AWFUL! YOU WANT TO LEAVE AN INJURED GIRL ALL BY HERSELF?〉
SHE SPEAKS SO QUICKLY, MAYBE I MISHEARD...

〈WHAT...?
〈WHAT WOULD YOU DO THAT FOR?!〉
〈RICHARD SAID IT WOULD BE MORE CONVENIENT THAT WAY〉
〈OH〉
〈BY THE WAY,
I ALREADY MOVED MY BAGS TO YOUR ROOM.〉
〈HE EVEN PREPARED A SPARE KEY FOR ME〉
ズキン
TAKO
WHAT...
IS THIS...?
IT'S SUDDENLY HARD TO BREATHE...
ズキン
TAKO
SHE SEEMS SO INTIMATE WITH MICAH-SAN..

MY CHEST... IT... HURTS...
カタン
YUUKI?
I'M SORRY ABOUT...
INTERRUPTING YOU...
WHAT...? YUUKI!
UM. I...
I SHOULD BE GOING...
スッ
SIGH

WHAT ARE THESE FEELINGS?
MICAH-SAN IS A FULL GROWN MAN.
OF COURSE HE WOULD HAVE A WOMAN LIKE THAT.
HE AND I ARE JUST FRIENDS.
WAIT...
MICAH-SAN...

I'M SO ASHAMED OF MYSELF.
IT WAS JUST ONE DRUNKEN KISS...
WHAT WAS I SO HAPPY ABOUT?
IT MUST HAVE MEANT NOTHING TO MICAH-SAN...
EVEN IF IT WAS...
SPECIAL TO ME...
I THOUGHT THAT MAYBE IT WAS,
SPECIAL TO HIM, TOO...
...AND YET...

...HUH?
SIRP
THAT WAS JUST MY SELFISH WISH...
UM...
NO I'M NOT
ARE YOU CRYING?
ARE YOU GETTING BACK FROM A DATE?
YEAH, I'M WALKING HER HOME.
HEY, BRO.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
OH, OKAY.
ACTUALLY, THIS IS FAR ENOUGH. BYE-BYE!

YEAH I DON'T REALLY UNDER-STAND IT
JUST EXACTLY,
WHAT IS IT YOU WANT TO DO?
...MAN
ARE YOU STILL STRESSING OVER IT?
WORRYING ABOUT EVERY-THING AROUND YOU.
YOU'RE ALWAYS TRYING TO BE AN ADULT, NOT JUST WHERE THE COMPANY'S CONCERNED.
...HUH?
SO WHY DON'T YOU DO SOMETHING TO CHANGE IT?
IF YOU'RE STILL TROUBLED ABOUT THIS, YOU MUST BE UNSATISFIED WITH HOW IT'S TURNING OUT

NOT DOING ANY-THING BECAUSE YOU'RE AFRAID OF GETTING HURT MAKES YOU UNTRUE TO YOURSELF
EH HUH?
IT CAN BE FUN TO LIVE YOUR LIFE WITHOUT CARES,
BUT IF YOU JUST GO WITH THE FLOW, YOU'LL NEVER GAIN ANYTHING FOR YOURSELF
SHO ..
YOU'RE.
YOU'RE RIGHT
I...
I THINK... YOU'RE RIGHT, SHO

I THINK I UNDERSTAND
MICAH-SAN...
KISSED ME...
THE TRUTH IS, I WAS HAPPY
IT'S WHAT I WANTED...

BECAUSE I...
BECAUSE...
MAYBE TO MICAH-SAN IT WASN'T ANY-THING SPECIAL.
BROTHER
BUT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO ME.
BECAUSE I LOVE HIM...

UNIVERSAL HOTEL
〈WILL THIS DO, MY LADY?〉
PHOP
STARE
〈JAPANESE WOMEN'S NAILS ARE SO DELICATE AND LOVELY.〉
YUUKI...
HE'S A SMART KID, SO HE MUST HAVE UNDERSTOOD RIGHT AWAY ABOUT ALEX AND I.
I WONDER WHAT YOU'RE DOING NOW...?
〈I HAVE TO WORK TOMORROW, SO I CAN'T GO OUT WITH YOU.〉
〈THAT'S FINE. I'M GOING TO THE BEAUTY PARLOR AND NAIL SALON TOMORROW.〉

IS THERE REALLY... NO HOPE FOR IT?
IS THIS AS FAR AS OUR RELATIONSHIP CAN GO?
WHAT CAN I DO...?
〈HEY! ARE YOU LISTENING, MICAH?〉
〈IT'S NOT SO UNUSUAL TO HAVE THE HONEYMOON BEFORE THE WEDDING, IS IT?〉
〈WE'RE FINALLY ALONE TOGETHER. YOU SHOULDN'T MAKE THAT GRUMPY FACE.〉

〈I'M TIRED, ALEX.〉
〈I'M GOING OUT TO GET SOME AIR.〉
〈ALL RIGHT COME BACK SOON, OKAY?〉
SHUT
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
CHERRY BLOSSOMS AT NIGHT...
I DIDN'T KNOW THE HOTEL HAD A VIEW LIKE THIS HIDDEN BEHIND IT...

FLEETING...
MAYBE IT'S THE JAPANESE BLOOD IN ME...
MODEST, BUT SO VERY GENTLE...
ALMOST LIKE YUUKI HIMSELF...
A BIT CHILLY, PERHAPS, BUT CHERRY BLOSSOMS TRULY ARE MARVELOUS.
JUST WATCHING THE FALLING BLOSSOMS MAKES ME FEEL NOSTALGIC.

YU...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE ?
AH .
RUSTLE
YUUKI ...
UM...
I JUST

I CAME TO SEE YOU.
THAT IS...
I'M GLAD...
I...
BUT... I DIDN'T HAVE THE COURAGE TO GO INTO THE HOTEL...
I WAS JUST HESITATING OUT HERE WHEN YOU CAME...
THERE'S SOMETHING I HAVE TO TELL YOU.

I KNOW YOU HAVE A FIANCÉ,
I...
BUT STILL...I I JUST...
I WANTED YOU TO KNOW... HOW I FELT...
I REALLY LIKE YOU...!!

I KNOW... IT MUST BE SUCH A BOTHER FOR YOU.
AND I'M SORRY.
YUUKI...
HUH...?!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU AT ALL.
MY MIND IS IN COMPLETE DISARRAY.
YOU REJECTED MY KISS,
AND JUST WHEN I THOUGHT IT WAS HOPELESS YOU SHOW UP!
BUT SUDDENLY YOU'VE BECOME BOLD.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE SHY,
...
HOWEVER...

I FEEL THE SAME AS YOU...
I LOVE YOU.
...!
CLUTCH

Chapter 3

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YOU COULD CATCH A COLD.
YOUR CHEEKS ARE COLD...
YUUKI...
YES... UM...
I CAME THROUGH THE PARK...
A-CHOO!
UM. IS... THAT REALLY OKAY?
WHY DON'T YOU WARM YOURSELF THERE?
THE HOTEL HAS A 24 HOUR SPA.
HEALING GARDENS SPA
HAAAAAAAAA
SSSSSSS

IT'S COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM THE OLD BATH AT OUR HOTEL.
IT'S SO BIG AND LUXURIOUS!
WOW...
OH... REALLY?
HURRY UP, MICAH-SAN!
I'M GOING IN FIRST, OKAY?
...
YUUKI...

BUT HE'S SO DEFENSE-LESS...
I WONDER HOW HOT IT IS...?
ﾌﾑ
I'M SO HAPPY TO BE ALONE WITH YUUKI LIKE THIS...
BEING SO CASUALLY NAKED IN FRONT OF SOMEONE ...
I'M NOT USED TO,
ドキ
ドキ
I JUST NEVER THOUGHT I'D BE SHARING A BATH WITH A HAND-SOME YOUNG MAN.
AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, IT'S NO GOOD TELLING MYSELF NOT TO REACT TO IT.
ズキ
ズキ
ズキ

NOT TO MENTION THAT I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'S THINKING, EITHER.
MICAH-SAN SURE IS TAKING A WHILE
DID HE GO INTO THE SAUNA?
I'M START-ING TO FEEL A LITTLE LIGHT-HEADED
LOOKS LIKE THERE'S ANOTHER BATH OVER THERE. I'LL CHECK IT OUT
WOW, EVERY-THING IS REAL!
IT'S A WATERFALL BATH!

YUUKI ?
ARE YOU THERE ?
OH...
YEAH!
SPLASH
I WISH OUR HOTEL HAD A PLACE LIKE THIS...
SPLASH
MM, THIS MUST BE GREAT FOR STIFF SHOULDERS
...
SORRY I TOOK SO LONG.
THIS PLACE IS SO BIG, I GOT A LITTLE LOST.
IT'S GONE DOWN FOR NOW
WOW...

SHOOSH
MICAH-SAN...
SO THIS IS A WATERFALL BATH
ドキ
ドキ
EVEN NAKED, HE'S STILL AMAZING.
AMERICANS MUST TRAIN THEIR BODIES PRETTY WELL...
YUUKI

LET'S GO IN TOGETHER LIKE THIS
AH
MI...
MICAH-SAN...
HIS SHOULDERS ARE SO BROAD. .
WE'RE SO CLOSE I CAN FEEL HIM BREATHING...
I REALLY CAN'T BELIEVE,
THAT WE'VE COME TO ACCEPT OUR FEELINGS LIKE THIS
KISS

I'M SORRY
I GRABBED YOU SO SUDDENLY.
BUT I CAN'T HELP WANTING TO TOUCH YOU
..RIGHT
HUH?
I'M SORRY
I'M JUST EXCITED TO BE WITH YOU LIKE THIS...
I MEAN
IT'S ALL RIGHT
YOU CAN HOLD ME TIGHTER
ドキ ドキ
ドキ ドキ

YUUKI...
IF YOU EXCITE ME TOO MUCH...
PLEASE...
SPLOOSH
トゥ...ン
ドキ ドキ
HOLD ME
TIGHTER
I WON'T BE ABLE TO STOP
MMN

MMM...
MICAH-SAN...
HAAH...
AH...
IT FEELS LIKE...
MY INSIDES ARE TINGLING...

SENSATIONS LIKE THESE...
I'VE NEVER FELT,
YOU'RE SO ADORABLE
YUUKI.
AH...
TREMBLE
BLUSH
ドキ
ドキ
ARE YOU NERVOUS?
IS THIS YOUR FIRST TIME.?
IT'S ALL RIGHT...
RELAX...

MICAH-SAN...
AH...
MMN...
AH...
SLIP
SIGH
MM...
KISS
HAAH...
LICK

AHH...
HAAH...
HAAH
IT FEELS SO GOOD...
IT'S LIKE MY HEAD IS FLOATING FURTHER AND FURTHER AWAY...
AHH—!
FURTHER...

THUD
AWAY...
YUUKI...?!
WHERE...
WHERE AM I?

THIS IS A HOTEL SUITE
I BROUGHT YOU HERE AFTER YOU PASSED OUT IN THE SPA
EXCUSE ME.
OH, YUUKI
YOU'RE AWAKE?
NOW...
THAT YOU MENTION IT...
WORRY
BLUSH
JUST DRINK SOME COLD WATER AND REST
OKAY...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO APOLOGIZE.
I'M...
I'M SO SORRY...!

IT'S ALL RIGHT
IT'S PROBABLY BETTER THIS WAY
AFTER HOW... SUDDENLY EVERYTHING HAPPENED...
N-NO!
NOT... NOT AT ALL...
I MEAN.. I...
I WAS... SO HAPPY...
YUUKI...
ドキ
ドキ

!
IN THAT CASE, MAYBE WE COULD...
CONTINUE WHERE WE LEFT OFF...?
Y...
YES...
MICAH-SAN...
ドキン
THE SPA WAS NICE.
BUT A BED REALLY IS BEST...
BE TOGETHER LIKE THIS..
...MMN.
I'M SO HAPPY THAT WE CAN,
Pi
BEEP

SLUMP
A CELL PHONE?
BEEP
PiPiPiPiPiPi
BEEP
BEEP
SIGH
I'M SORRY THIS'LL JUST TAKE A SECOND...
IT'S MINE WHAT AWFUL TIMING...
HELLO?
(YOU SAID YOU WERE JUST GETTING SOME AIR, AND YOU'RE NOT BACK YET?!)
(MICAH! WHERE ARE YOU?!)
(JEEZ!)

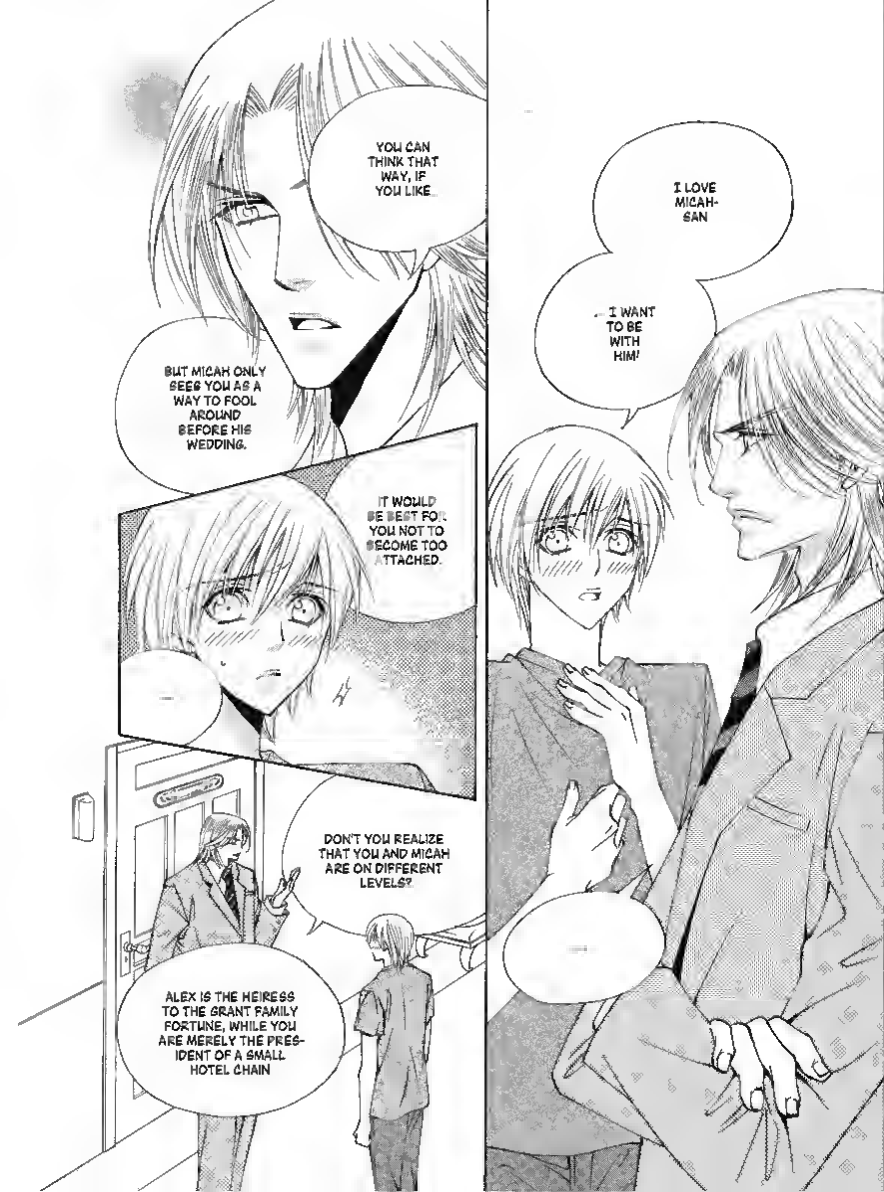
BEEP
(DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW LONG I'VE BEEN WAITING?!)
(YES… I KNOW.)
(I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.)
MICAH-SAN…?
I'M SORRY
IT'S MY FAULT FOR TAKING UP YOUR TIME
OH, REALLY?
JUST A CALL ABOUT WORK.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME YOU'D BETTER GO
OKAY BUT…
LIM…
WE'LL HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE AT THIS… WON'T WE…?

YUUKI
!
Chu!
SMACK!
IF YOU KEEP SAYING SUCH ADORABLE THINGS, I'M GOING TO JUMP YOU AGAIN
TA-TUMP
GRAB
PiPi PiPi
BEEP BEEP BEEP
KSUMP
UGHH...
SHIT.
OH...
OKAY!!
I'LL MAKE THIS UP TO YOU!
I'M COMING!
SLAM

MICAH-SAN IS KIND OF CUTE...
SNICKER
WHEN HE'S A LITTLE FRANTIC.
CLICK
I'M SO GLAD WE CAN BE TOGETHER LIKE THIS..
AND.
I WONDER IF...
ドキ
WE HAVEN'T GONE THAT FAR YET
NO! I'M GETTING CARRIED AWAY!
HIS IMAGINATION IS CENSORED!
WE'LL EVER DO THAT...

MAYBE HE FORGOT SOMETHING...?
CLICK
I'M COMING
MICAH-SA...
HUH? IS IT MICAH-SAN?
YEE..?
FWOOO
...?!
MICAH ISN'T COMING BACK
HUH...?

HE'S RETURNED TO HIS FIANCÉ.
SHE'S MORE IMPORTANT TO HIM THAN YOU ARE.
I— I KNOW HE HAS A FIANCÉ...!
THEN I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU STAYED AWAY FROM HIM.
B...
BUT...
YOUR PRESENCE IS A NUISANCE TO HIM.


I LOVE MICAH-SAN
I WANT TO BE WITH HIM!
YOU CAN THINK THAT WAY, IF YOU LIKE...
BUT MICAH ONLY SEES YOU AS A WAY TO FOOL AROUND BEFORE HIS WEDDING.
IT WOULD BE BEST FOR YOU NOT TO BECOME TOO ATTACHED.
DON'T YOU REALIZE THAT YOU AND MICAH ARE ON DIFFERENT LEVELS?
ALEX IS THE HEIRESS TO THE GRANT FAMILY FORTUNE, WHILE YOU ARE MERELY THE PRESIDENT OF A SMALL HOTEL CHAIN

GASP
BEING JAPANESE, I'M CERTAIN YOU UNDERSTAND
THAT IS, WHAT WOULD HAPPEN IF THE MARRIAGE WAS CALLED OFF WITHOUT DUE CAUSE
YOU MEAN... A TRIAL...?"
*NOTE: THIS HAPPENS IN JAPAN
PRECISELY.
MICAH WOULD HAVE TO PAY A COMPENSATION TO HER.
AND CONSIDERING HOW FAMOUS SHE IS, IT WOULD BE QUITE A BIT OF MONEY
ARE YOU REALLY WILLING TO PUT A NUMBER OF OUR DEAR EMPLOYEES OUT ON THE STREETS?

YOU UNDERSTAND THAT, DON'T YOU?
WELL, OF COURSE YOU DO. YOUR HOTEL IS ALREADY IN THE RED.
BUT I...
SINCE YOU UNDERSTAND, JUST GO HOME
FINISH YOUR HOMEWORK OR SOMETHING.
BUT
THAT CAN'T BE...
SHUDDER
MICAH-SAN...

CAN YOU PROMISE ME,
THAT YOU'LL NEVER MEET WITH MICAH AGAIN ?
ARE YOU LISTENING TO ME?!
GRAB
AH
THAT TIMID ATTITUDE OF YOURS IS RATHER IRRITATING
!
PLEASE KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF OUR PRESIDENT

WA
WADA-SAN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE...?
YOU'D ASKED WHERE REMMINGTON WAS STAYING, SO I THOUGHT YOU'D BE HERE...
WADA-SAN
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON, BUT IT DOESN'T APPEAR PLEASANT
AS AN ASSISTANT, YOU OUGHT TO KEEP BETTER TRACK OF YOUR EMPLOYER'S WHEREABOUTS
SLAM
HE'S QUITE THE NUISANCE

PERHAPS RICHARD DIDN'T SPEAK KINDLY,
BUT I DON'T THINK HE'S WRONG.
WADA-SAN
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
WADA-SAN I'M SORRY
I'M OKAY
BUT,
SLUMP
I'M PRETTY TIRED
YUUKI-SAN

MICAH-SAN...
I DON'T THINK YOU SHOULD MEET WITH REMMINGTON IN PRIVATE AGAIN...
...FOR THE SAKE OF OUR COMPANY, AS WELL...
BUT THAT...
...ALL RIGHT
EVEN THOUGH...
WE WERE ABLE TO CONFESS OUR FEELINGS TO EACH OTHER...

〈MICAH!!〉
〈IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS WHERE I GO.〉
〈WHAT'S WITH THE ATTITUDE--??
〈RICHARD WAS JUST HERE. HE TOLD ME "MICAH HAS A LOVER HERE IN JAPAN."〉
〈WHERE ON EARTH HAVE YOU BEEN?! I WAS LOOKING FOR YOU!!〉
〈IS THAT TRUE?〉
〈I'M NOT ANSWERING THAT.〉
〈ALEX.〉

《JUST WHAT IS GOING ON?!》
《I WANT YOU TO EXPLAIN IT TO ME.》
《I AM YOUR FIANCÉ.》
《I HAVE A RIGHT TO KNOW!》
《...ALEX.》
HOW DARE HE MAKE FUN OF ME...
《WH...》
《WHAT'S WITH HIM?!》
《PLEASE LEAVE ME ALONE. YOUR VOICE IS GIVING ME A HEADACHE.》
《I'M FED UP WITH YOUR SUPERIOR ATTITUDE.》

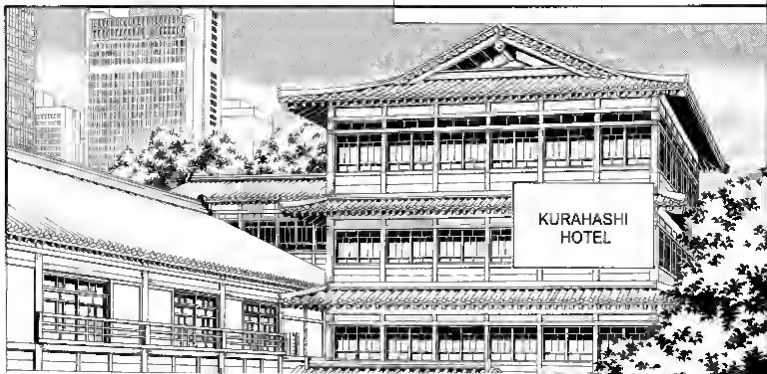
(I'M... PREGNANT.)
(YOU CAN'T BE SO COLD TO A PREGNANT WOMAN, CAN YOU!?
(...HUH!?
(I'M...)

(WHAT NOW? IT'S YOUR CHILD, YOU KNOW!)
(HOW CAN YOU SAY YOU HAVE A JAPANESE LOVER NOW!?)
ALEX
(SO WHAT?)
(HUH?)
(HONESTLY, I'M NOT IN LOVE WITH YOU.)
(I CAN'T MARRY YOU.)

〈MICAH 〉
〈IF YOU REALLY ARE PREGNANT, I'LL PROVIDE FOR YOU〉
〈HOWEVER,〉
TORU
〈WHY 〉?
〈WHY 〉?
〈BUT I LOVE YOU, MICAH!〉
〈MICAH 〉
〈I CAN'T BE WITH YOU.〉

〈MICAH, HE...〉
〈I KNOW.〉
〈ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?〉
〈RICHARD...〉
ゴッ
〈ALEXANDRIA〉

〈I'LL MAKE HIM GIVE UP HIS JAPANESE LOVER〉
〈I'LL SPEAK TO HIM.〉


KURAHASHI HOTEL

コンコン
YUUKI-SAN?
YUUKI-SAN...
I'M COMING IN
CHAIR
YOUR ATTENDANT SAID YOU DIDN'T EAT LUNCH. HE'S WORRIED ABOUT YOU
YEAH
I'M SORRY... I DON'T HAVE MUCH OF AN APPETITE...
PLEASE, LEAVE ME ALONE

EVERYTHING JUST...
FEELS SO EMPTY...
SIGH
CRACK
PLEASE DON'T THINK ABOUT IT TOO MUCH
AM I... EVEN STILL ALIVE...?
WHATEVER I TOUCH HAS NO FEELING...
WHATEVER I EAT HAS NO TASTE...
WE HAD SO MUCH FUN TOGETHER...
BUT NOW IT FEELS SO FAR IN THE PAST...

Micah
BLINK
...?!
MICAH-SAN...
WHAT SHOULD I DO...?
TH-THUMP
I WANT TO TALK TO HIM, BUT...
MY PHONE...
BZZZZZZ
TH-THUMP
SHAKE
YOU'RE A NUISANCE.
BEEP
OFF

I AM... JUST A NUISANCE... TO MICAH-SAN
CLATTER
MY CHEST HURTS...
MICAH-SAN...
I REALLY WANT TO SEE YOU, BUT...
THE FOLLOWING NUMBER CANNOT BE REACHED
YUUKI 090XX-X
REDIALING

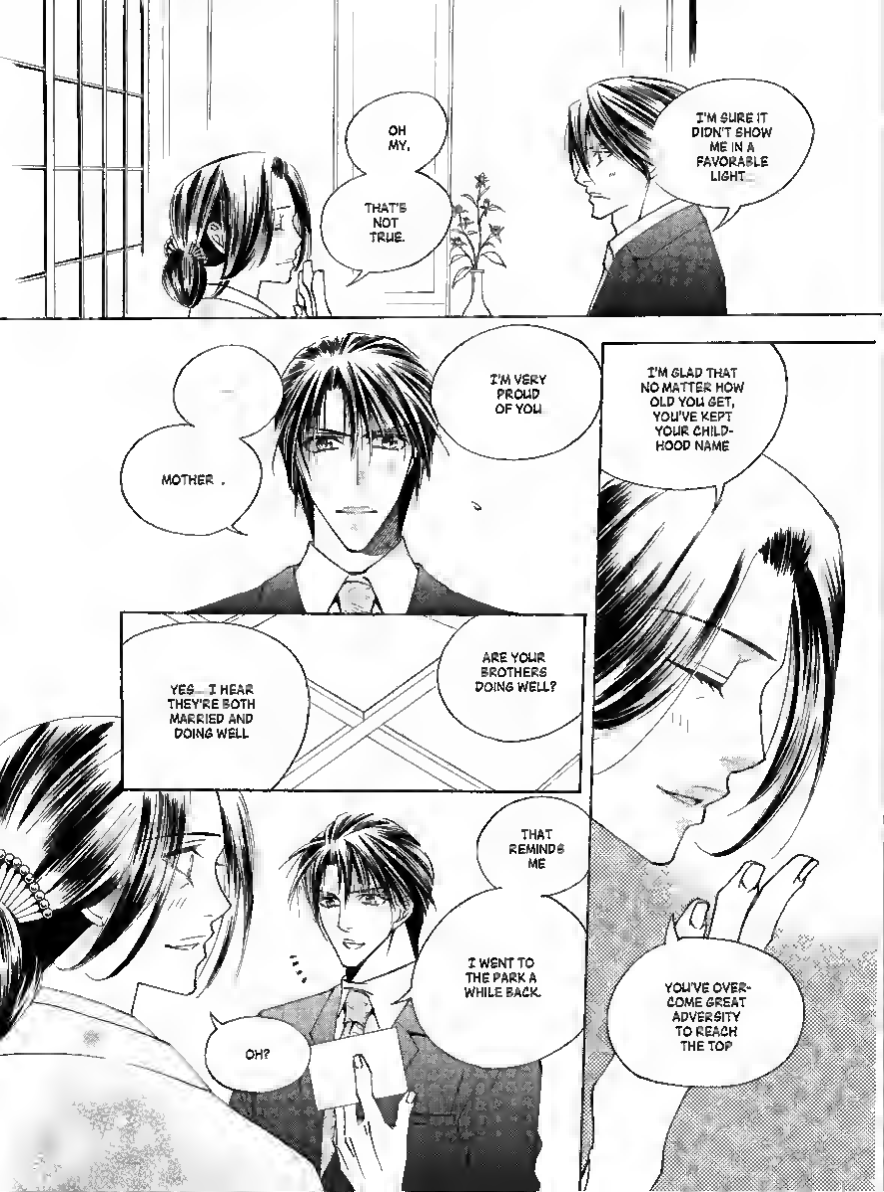
I COULD CALL HIS OFFICE, BUT CHANCES ARE HIS ASSISTANT WADA WOULD ANSWER.
SHOULD I GIVE UP FOR NOW?
YUUKI... DID YOU TURN YOUR PHONE OFF?
...ALEX..
I NEVER WOULD HAVE SAID THOSE THINGS TO HER A FEW MONTHS AGO.
I SPOKE TOO HARSHLY TO HER...

I'M JUST BEING SELFISH...
BUT...
THAT ENCOUNTER HAS CHANGED ME...
I'M THE ONE WHO'S CHANGED..
CLENCH
IT WASN'T JUST TO BETTER MY POSITION... I DID WANT TO MAKE ALEX HAPPY.

HOW CAN I USE THIS TO MY ADVANTAGE?
HOW IMPORTANT IS YUUKI TO ME?
I NEVER QUESTIONED MY DECISIONS BEFORE...
BUT NOW...
I'M FREE, NOW. I'M NOT LIKE I WAS AS A BOY, TREADING SO CAREFULLY.
CLINK
BY GIVING UP PARTS OF MYSELF, I OBTAINED SOCIAL STATUS, PRESTIGE, AND WEALTH.
BEEP PI PI BEEP

A TRADITIONAL JAPANESE RESTAURANT
YES?
YOUR GUEST WILL BE HERE IN JUST A MOMENT
THANK YOU
SUCH A HISTORICAL PLACE. IT'S JUST LIKE HER...

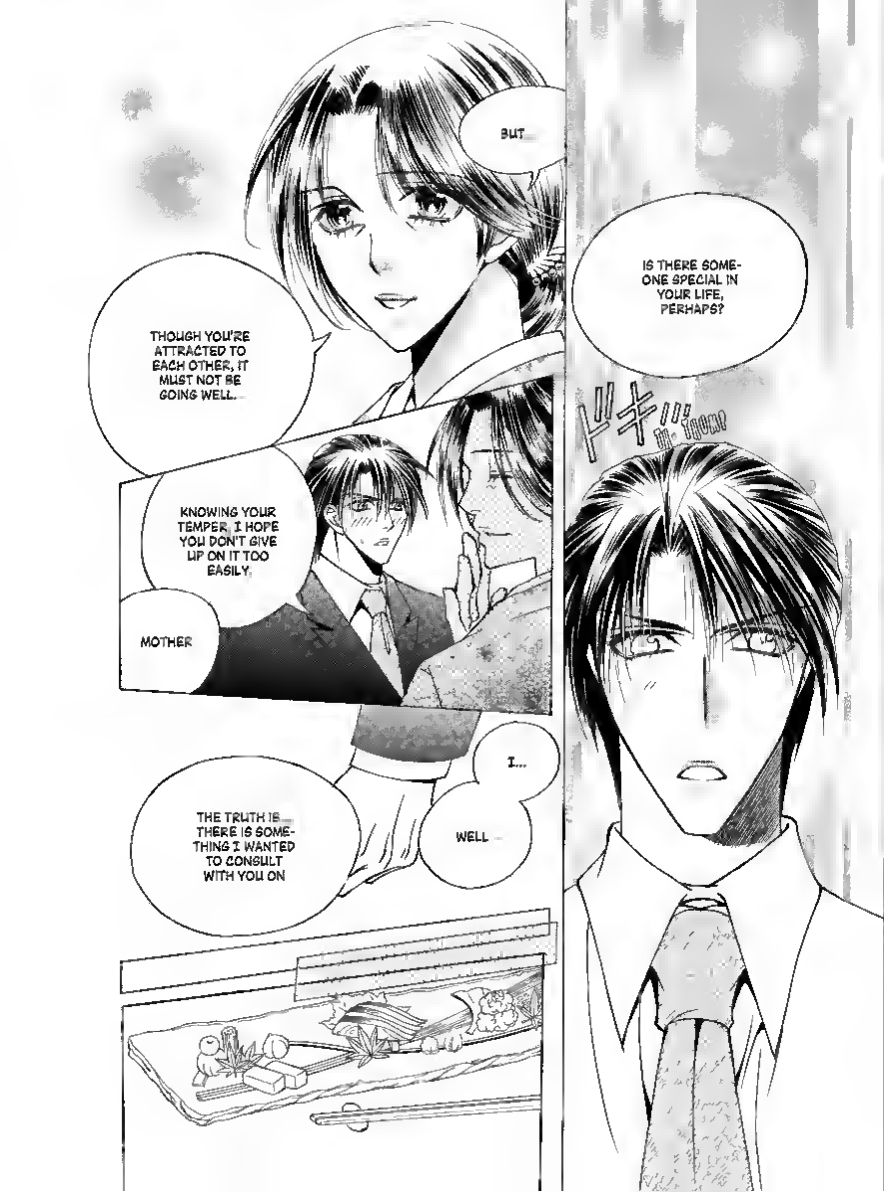
I'M SORRY ABOUT CALLING YOU SO SUDDENLY...
NOT AT ALL
IT'S JUST, I SAW AN ARTICLE ABOUT YOU IN A BUSINESS MAGAZINE
...
MOTHER.
RYU!
ARE YOU WELL?


I'M SURE IT DIDN'T SHOW ME IN A FAVORABLE LIGHT...
OH MY,
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
I'M GLAD THAT NO MATTER HOW OLD YOU GET, YOU'VE KEPT YOUR CHILD-HOOD NAME
I'M VERY PROUD OF YOU
MOTHER .
ARE YOUR BROTHERS DOING WELL?
YES... I HEAR THEY'RE BOTH MARRIED AND DOING WELL
YOU'VE OVER-COME GREAT ADVERSITY TO REACH THE TOP
THAT REMINDS ME
I WENT TO THE PARK A WHILE BACK.
OH?

BUT I STILL LOVE THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS
THEY HEAL MY SOUL
...
I DON'T REMEMBER IT WELL MYSELF
RYU, AGE 3
RYU.

I AM YOUR MOTHER. I CAN TELL.
...I DO?
BEFORE, IT SEEMED YOU CARED ONLY FOR YOURSELF.
BUT NOW YOU HAVE GAINED A WEALTH OF SPIRIT.

YOU SEEM A BIT DIFFERENT FROM THE LAST TIME WE MET.
HUH?


BUT...
IS THERE SOMEONE SPECIAL IN YOUR LIFE, PERHAPS?
ドキ!!! Mr. SUGAR
THOUGH YOU'RE ATTRACTED TO EACH OTHER, IT MUST NOT BE GOING WELL...
KNOWING YOUR TEMPER, I HOPE YOU DON'T GIVE UP ON IT TOO EASILY.
MOTHER
I...
WELL...
THE TRUTH IS... THERE IS SOMETHING I WANTED TO CONSULT WITH YOU ON

I FELT THE SAME...
I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL...
WHEN I WAS ENGAGED TO YOUR FATHER, I HAD MY RESERVATIONS
HONESTLY, I... AM NOT CERTAIN WHAT TO DO
OH...?
IS THAT SO?
I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND THE LANGUAGE WELL, AND I DIDN'T GET ALONG WITH MY HUSBAND'S OTHER CHILDREN.
I WAS HOMESICK, AND UNABLE TO RETURN TO MY FAMILY.
I WAS TO BE MARRIED, AND LIVE IN AMERICA IT WAS HARD WORK.
16
IT'S A FOUR-LEAF CLOVER!
MOMMY!
THAT I CHOSE THE MAN I LOVED, AND HAD YOU.
BUT I NEVER REGRETTED,

RYU
SO THAT WHEN YOU LOOK BACK, YOU DON'T HAVE ANY REGRETS
FIND THE THINGS YOU DESIRE,
AND WORK FOR THEM AS HARD AS YOU CAN
BE HONEST WITH YOURSELF.
MAKE THAT THE STORY OF YOUR LIFE.
MOTHER...

I WILL
YOU'VE GIVEN ME MY RESOLVE
KISS
MY BATTLE!
I'M GOING RIGHT NOW!
THANK YOU MOTHER
I WILL ALWAYS SUPPORT YOU
GOOD BYE
I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN SOON

KURAHASHI HOME
BRO
I'M COMING IN.
CREAK
BRO... ARE YOU OKAY?
I TALKED TO WADA-SAN
I HEAR YOU'RE NOT EATING...?
I KNOW.
IF YOU KEEP THIS UP YOUR HEALTH WILL SUFFER.
IS IT BECAUSE OF THAT REMMINGTON GUY?
TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON

I'M SORRY,
FOR WORRYING YOU
JEEZ.
YOU'RE SO ANNOYING!
WHAT IS IT?
I WON'T UNDERSTAND IF YOU DON'T TELL ME
...SHO...
TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON
...SHO...
YOU CAN ASK ME FOR ANY-THING, YOU KNOW
ACTUALLY, I HAVE A FAVOR TO ASK
...SHO...

CREAK
MICAH
YOU'RE BACK?
YEAH
THUMP
UNIVERS
HM.
?!
WHAT?!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? ARE YOU SERIOUS?!
ARE YOU GOING OUT AGAIN?
YEAH. I'M GOING TO SEE YUUKI

MI...
OF COURSE I AM.
MICAH...
LET ME...
UNDER-STAND SOME-THING
WHY ARE YOU SO CONCERNED WITH THAT JAPANESE BOY?
AND I HAVE NO INTEREST IN TAKING ORDERS FROM *ANYONE* ON THE SUBJECT.
EVEN YOU
WHY NOT ME, WHO'S BEEN AT YOUR SIDE FOR SO MANY YEARS?

MICAH...
I KEPT MY FEELINGS HIDDEN BECAUSE I THOUGHT YOU WERE STRAIGHT
WHY CHOOSE THIS BOY NOW...?
RICHARD...?
I'M THE ONE,
WHO *REALLY* LOVES AND UNDER-STANDS YOU...!!
RICHA--
SHOVE!!
ドンッ!!

HEY STOP
KNOCK
OW...
RICHARD...?!
LET GO...!
THEN I...
I WON'T!
IF YOU'RE GOING TO BE TAKEN BY ANOTHER MAN..
I CAN'T HOLD BACK ANY LONGER!
CLENCH

RICHARD ..!
STOP..
STOP IT!
GRIP
CUT IT OUT!
HAH
MICAH -
SLAM

RICHARD...
...
WHY ARE YOU APOLOGIZING?
I'M THE ONE WHO PUSHED YOU DOWN.
WHAT?
...
OR FIRE ME! I DON'T NEED YOUR SYMPATHY.
IF YOU'RE REJECTING ME, WHY NOT JUST LEAVE?
REACH
I'M SORRY...
BUT...
MAYBE...

WHAT IF...
I REALLY AM IMPORTANT TO YOU...?
I MUST HAVE BEEN UNCONSCIOUSLY HURTING YOU ALL ALONG.
MICAH...
I'VE BEEN WITH YOU FOR SEVERAL YEARS
I'VE SUPPORTED YOU AND THIS COMPANY FROM THE BEGINNING
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU JUST SAID THAT
WHAT?
YOU REALLY ARE IRRITATING

PLEASE, GO QUICKLY!
I AM NOT WHAT YOU NEED
I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN THIS
GO TO THE PERSON YOU NEED THE PERSON WHO NEEDS YOU
BUT I COULDN'T DENY MY FEELINGS
BUT YOUR HEART...
IT WAS SO COLD, AS IF INCASED IN ICE...
I DIDN'T HAVE THE STRENGTH TO MELT IT...

LOVING SOMEONE?
WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT,
BEEP
THE INSECURITY, THE FEELING OF BEING INCOMPLETE.
WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT?
THANK YOU, RICHARD.
RICHARD...
THIS FEELING OF DISSAT-ISFACTION?
SCRUNCH
HOW CAN I RELIEVE,
SIGH

WHERE ARE YOU NOW?
UM...
WADA-SAN SAID I SHOULD HAVE A CHANGE OF SCENERY
..
YES?
HELLO? YUUKI?
IT CONNECTED...!

JUST WAIT THERE.
N... NO, DON'T...
I'M IN THE OTANI HOTEL, ROOM 1881...
ALL RIGHT I'M COMING
AND... I'M SO UPSET MY CHEST HURTS
I LOOK AWFUL..

YUUKI, DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?
WE HAVE TO TALK.
ANYWAY, LET'S MEET
I'M WILLING TO TAKE ANY RISKS
I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU..
I KNOW IT'S FOOLISH,
I'M COMING
BUT I WANT HIM.

RING RING
RING RING
RING
..
YUUKI...
SQUEEZE
MICAH...
SAN...?

I DON'T WANT TO BE SEPARATED FROM YOU AGAIN...
I NEEDED TO SEE YOU !!
MICAH-SAN...
MMM...
ME, TOO...

MMM...
AH...
...MMN
I CAN'T HELP IT...
YUUKI...
MICAH-SAN...
I WANT TO MAKE LOVE TO YOU...!

IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, OR IF IT HURTS... TELL ME TO STOP.
SLIDE
AHH ..
OKAY...
BECAUSE...
I DON'T THINK I CAN STOP ON MY OWN...
YUUKI...
SHUDDER
AHHH!!
MMN...

YUUK!... I WANT ALL OF YOU...
SHOW ME YOUR HEART AND BODY...
MICAH-SAN...
AHH!
STO.
NOT THERE...
YOU'RE SO CUTE

SHUDDER
!
RELAX, YUUKI...
PUSH
!
DON'T BE AFRAID...
MICAH...
-SAN...
I WON'T EVER LET YOU GO AGAIN
WE'VE FINALLY BECOME ONE...
MICAH... GA...!

MMN
THIS PAIN, THIS JOY...
AHAH
THEY'RE OURS...
I LOVE YOU, TOO
YUUK!
THRUST
THRUST
AAH!!
HAAH
I LOVE YOU
NNI

YUUK!
AHH...!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT...?
NO... I'M SO GLAD
I'M SORRY IF I OVER-DID IT...
THEY'RE PROOF THAT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME WE'VE EVER TRULY BEEN IN LOVE.

I'M SO HAPPY, I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE THIS IS REAL...
I DO, TOO...
YUUKI I LOVE YOU
MICAH... SAN...
WE HAVE... TO TALK.
YUUKI...
WHAT ?!
IT WASN'T BECAUSE OF YOU
IT'S SOMETHING I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT FOR A WHILE.
OKAY.
I BROKE UP WITH ALEX.

YUUKI
I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU ABOUT MY PAST
I WAS BORN THE YOUNGEST OF THREE SONS
OUR FAMILY HAD WEALTH, BUT IT HAD MANY PROBLEMS
THE REST OF MY FATHER'S FAMILY WOULDN'T ACCEPT MY JAPANESE MOTHER AS HIS SECOND WIFE
WHEN MY FATHER PASSED AWAY UNEXPECTEDLY AND OUR INHERITANCE WAS DIVIDED,
AFTER THAT, I WORKED HARD TO BE ACCEPTED BY MY BROTHERS AND THE FAMILY—
MY PORTION WAS LESS THAN ONE THIRD— I CLEARLY FELT THAT THE FAMILY WISHED I HADN'T BEEN BORN
I DEVELOPED MY OWN COMPANY AND OVERTOOK THEM. THEY STILL HOLD A GRUDGE AGAINST ME FOR THAT—
IT WAS DURING THAT TIME THAT I LOST SOMETHING IMPORTANT—

YUUKI...
I'M SO GLAD THAT I MET YOU.
I BECAME ENGAGED TO ALEX IN ORDER TO FURTHER MY POSITION
I REGRET THAT DEEPLY NOW
MY HEART WOULD STILL BE ENCASED IN ICE.
IF NOT FOR YOU,
I LOVE YOU
MICAH-SAN...
I WANT TO BE WITH YOU FOR-EVER.

BUT..
MICAH WOULD HAVE TO COMPENSATE HER
ARE YOU REALLY WILLING TO PUT A NUMBER OF OUR DEAR EMPLOYEES OUT ON THE STREETS?
I... LOVE YOU, TOO.
MICAH-SAN...
I...
I WANT TO BE WITH YOU, AND DO EVERYTHING I CAN FOR YOU...

KURAHASHI HOTEL
STEP
STEP
A BUSINESS MEETING WITH KURAHASHI ...?
WHAT COULD HAVE HAPPENED TO BRING THIS ABOUT?
I'M GOING HOME YUUKI
MICAH-SAN...
I'M SORRY...
GOOD-BYE...

WADA WAS AGAINST THE IDEA OF US WORKING TOGETHER
I FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE HE HAS A NEW PROPOSAL FOR US NOW...
IT DOESN'T MATTER... WE'LL KNOW ONCE WE'RE THERE
RICHARD...
HE'S ACTING COMPLETELY NORMAL.
I WONDER IF OUR RELATIONSHIP WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED...
フーン
I DON'T KNOW.
ISN'T THAT SECRETARY WADA OR WHOEVER THE ACTING HEAD OF KURAHASHI IS AT THE MOMENT?
YES...

EXCUSE US...
YO
HUH?
YOU REMMING-TON?
YUUK...
YES, BUT...
YOU ARE...?
OH, ME?
WHAT...?

I'M THE NEW ACTING DIRECTOR OF KURAHASHI, SHO KURAHASHI.
YUUKI'S MY OLDER BROTHER.
YOU'RE...
HUH. ?!
YUUKI'S... BROTHER ?
MY BROTHER HAS STEPPED DOWN
FROM NOW ON, WE'RE DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY
I...
YUUKI...
I SEE...

I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF OUR COMPANIES JOINING IN A LIMITED PARTNERSHIP
NOW THEN, LET'S DISCUSS OUR BUSINESS WITH YOUR COMPANY
WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON...?
THAT'S..
AS LONG AS IT IS PROFITABLE FOR BOTH OF US, OF COURSE...
SHO-SAN!
STARE
SLAM
YOU CAN'T JUST CONTINUE THIS ON YOUR OWN!
SO HANDLE IT, WILL YOU? AREN'T YOU MY ASSISTANT?
THAT IS NOT WHAT AN ASSISTANT DOES!!
WE HAVE TO PRESERVE TRADITION, AND GET THE AGREEMENT OF THE UPPER MANAGEMENT...
EXCUSE ME...
...YEAH
LOOKS LIKE YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND MY INTENTIONS JUST YET

KURAHASHI HOTEL HAS SURVIVED FOR GENERATIONS BY FOLLOWING TRADITION
BUT FROM NOW ON, I'M CLEANING THE "FLIS" OUT OF THE WOUND,
AND RECREATING AN ADMINISTRATION THAT HAS ITS EYES ON THE FUTURE. IF ANY OF OUR EMPLOYEES DON'T LIKE THAT, WE DON'T NEED THEM.
LET'S WORK HARD TO IMPROVE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR COMPANIES
YES
MICAH
YEAH
HE REMINDS ME OF A YOUNGER YOU.
YOU'RE RIGHT
BUT STILL...
SHO-SAN

I TOOK CONTROL UNDER MY BROTHER'S INSISTENCE.
SINCE HIS HEALTH IS POOR, HE INTENDS TO FIND SOME PEACE AND QUIET AT OUR MOTHER'S VILLA
ISN'T THIS ALL A BIT SUDDEN...?
WAS THERE SOME EXTERNAL PRESSURE THAT'S LED TO THIS?
NO
VILLA?
WHERE IS IT?
HOKKAIDO
HOKKAIDO?!

IT'S BEEN YEARS SINCE I VE TRAVELED BY MYSELF...
I HAVE TO GET AWAY FROM THE CITY FOR A WHILE...
RIGHT
ON TIME
I'VE STILL GOT A LITTLE WHILE BEFORE THE TRAIN COMES

CRUNCH
Le Soleil ☆ Sol'he'ra
IT'S...
BEAUTIFUL...
CRUNCH
WITH ME GONE, YOU CAN GO BACK TO ALEX.
MICAH-SAN...
I SHOULD HAVE DONE THIS FROM THE BEGINNING.
FLASH
SHO WILL DO A BETTER JOB RUNNING THE COMPANY THAN ME...
I'M...
ALL ALONE AGAIN...

THAT'S RIGHT... I'VE ALWAYS BEEN ALONE.
CHUCKLE
EVERYTHING IS GOING BACK TO NORMAL, REALLY.
IT WAS NICE FOR A WHILE.
BUT NOW I'M GOING TO WORK HARD, AND LIVE ON MY OWN.
STEP
I'LL BE A BIT STRONGER.
WHEN I GET BACK...
GOOD-BYE.
I WAS RIGHT ALL ALONG...
NO ONE NEEDS ME...

I'M NOT GOING TO CRY ANYMORE...
ブロオオ
SCREECH
HAAH
YUUKI!
HUH...?!

WHAT ?
I DIDN'T WANT TO PUT THAT BURDEN ON YOU.
SO I—
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
IF YOU HAD TO BREAK UP THE MARRIAGE...
YOU'D HAVE HAD TO PAY HER A LARGE COMPENSATION, WOULDN'T YOU?
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME ?
WHY DID YOU LEAVE?!
WELL, I
IF I LEFT...
YOU COULD GET MARRIED TO ALEX.

YUUKI, CALM DOWN
THAT MAY BE THE CASE IN JAPAN,
HUH?
BUT IN AMERICA, THERE ARE NO COMPENSATIONAL MONIES FOR BREAKING AN ENGAGEMENT.
...WHAT...?
IT MUST HAVE BEEN RICHARD WHO TOLD YOU THAT.
IT'S ALL RIGHT I'VE TALKED TO HIM, AND THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

NO!
MICAH...
ARE YOU STILL NOT SURE?
SAN...
OR WAS THERE ANOTHER REASON WHY YOU LEFT...?

I CAN... STAY WITH YOU, CAN'T I...?
YES... WE'LL BE TOGETHER FOREVER...
HOTEL
YUUKI
MMN...

IT WAS SO DARK LAST TIME, I COULD BARELY SEE
I WANT TO SEE YOU NOW
AH
YUUKI
LICK
YOU'RE SO ADORABLE
MM

I'M... EMBARRASSED...
HAAH .
DON'T BE
HAAH
...MM.
YOU'RE JUST SO CUTE,
PUNCH
AH
SUCK
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH YOU.

!
TODAY, I WANT TO PLEASURE YOU
FROM EVERY POSSIBLE ANGLE...
AHH...
MMN
NOW SLOWLY...
LOWER YOUR HIPS...
MMM...
AHH...
AHH...

YOU RE SO GOOD
AHH NN
YUU KI
IT'S SO HOT, INSIDE YOU.
SQUEEZE
AHH
I CAN'T
I'M COMING

GO AHEAD...
OVER, AND OVER...
I'M GOING TO MAKE LOVE TO YOU AGAIN AND AGAIN.
AH...
AHH...!
AHH!
NNN...
MICAH... SAN...

I WANT...
MORE OF YOU, MICAH-SAN...
HAAH
YUUKI...!
AHH...
NNI
HAAH
AHH...
HAAH

AHH...!!
SEVERAL MONTHS LATER...
ALEXANDRIA MARRIED SOMEONE ELSE
IT SEEMS... SHE LIED ABOUT HER PREGNANCY...
I lied about being pregnant. I'm Sorry!
KURAHASHI AND SAKURA GARDEN SUITES COMPLETED THEIR BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP.
WADA-SAN AND RICHARD FOUGHT A LOT,
BUT WERE ABLE TO WORK TOGETHER IN THE END

AND US WELL!
RYU!
I'M SORRY I'M LATE.
I HAD TO TALK TO MY PROFESSOR ABOUT SOMETHING...
SHO CONTINUED TO BLOOM, AND BECAME THE FRESH NEW FACE IN THE FINANCIAL WORLD.
MAYBE HE'LL BECOME THE NEXT MICAH
I'VE MADE RESERVATIONS
SO CAN WE HAVE LUNCH TOGETHER TODAY?
I WORKED HARD TO BE ABLE TO GO TO SCHOOL IN AMERICA.

THERE MAY BE MORE DIFFICULTIES FOR US TO OVERCOME...
HM?
WHAT IS IT?
NO,
IT'S NOTHING.
BUT...
I KNOW WE'LL MAKE IT.

LET'S GO!
BECAUSE I HAVE SOMEONE TO LOVE.

Happy Birthday
RUSTLE
YUUKI...
HAPPY BIRTHDAY!
WOW!
THANK YOU!
SIT RIGHT THERE, AND I'LL BRING YOU A DRINK
I ASKED THE OWNER TO LET ME TAKE OVER FOR TODAY
OKAY
Happy Birthday

〈SEX ON THE BEACH.〉
SQUEEZE
I WORKED PART TIME AS A BAR-TENDER DURING COLLEGE
SHAKE
YOU'RE PRETTY GOOD AT THAT.
HERE YOU GO
YOU PREFER SWEET DRINKS, DON'T YOU?
WOW, IT'S SO CUTE! WHAT'S IT CALLED?
BUT STILL...
NO NEED TO GET UPSET
SMIRK
M-MICAH-SAN...!
YOU'RE SO CUTE WHEN YOU'RE EMBARRASSED
FIDGET
FIDGET
IT'S NOT LIKE WE HAVEN'T DONE THAT ALREADY

HMM.
IS THERE SOMETHING I CAN DO...?
YOUR BIRTHDAY WAS A FEW MONTHS AGO, WASN'T IT?
AND I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING FOR YOU.
OH.
BY THE WAY...
WELL THEN
WAIT JUST A MOMENT
KISS
!
WILL YOU GIVE ME MY PRESENT NOW?
HUH?
BATTLE
Sauza
GOLD
BLANCO

SACRIFICIAL OFFERING
MICAH SAN?
LIKE THIS?
WHAT ARE WE DOING ANYWAY?
〈BODY SHOTS〉
〈BODY 〉 WHAT?
AH!
SALT
SHAKE
LICK

NOW JUST SIT STILL.
MM—?
IT'LL BE A BIT COLD—
AH—
THIS IS NEXT.
?
I'LL JUST HELP MYSELF
MMN

MM...
LICK
SUCK
THIS KINDA...
FEELS FUNNY...
THEN IS THE SALT...
HOLD IT TIGHT, NOW.
MM...
AND LASTLY, THE LIME.
MM...
BITE
SQUISH

MN
AHH
YOU WANT TO TRY, YUUKI?
IT'S ALL RIGHT WE'LL CLEAN UP LATER
YEAH. .
BUT THIS
IT'S LIKE A FRESH KISS...
MM
THE TASTE OF THE LIME IS FILLING MY MOUTH. .
-!

LET'S ALWAYS LOVE EACH OTHER WITHOUT ABANDON
YES_♡
I'LL GIVE IT TO YOU LATER.
IT'S *VERY* IMPORTANT.
OH, I FORGOT TO GIVE IT TO YOU
HM?
YOUR *REAL* BIRTHDAY PRESENT.

L'Étoile Solitaire

Yuno Ogumi

June

Yaoi Manga